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SOCIOLOGICAL ESSAYS ON VEERASAIVISM

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PREFACE

The collected essays under the title *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, appeared in different professional journals and here I have tried to put them together so that the readers can easily reach them. I have not made any extensive revision of the original papers, although in some cases I have altered the title of the original papers to suit the theme of my argument.

The collection on the whole highlights some aspects of Veerasaivism in relation to caste structure, notions of purity, pollution, the economic drive and the liberal philosophy behind all these. It also throws light on political aspirations of the Veerasaiva Community in larger Mysore. The sectarian religious movement today has crystalized itself into a large number of occupational groups which sometime cut-across and at other times unite against other caste groups depending upon the interests involved. Each essay is independent and does not necessarily assume logical continuity, though it is there.

I record my gratitude to late Professor M. Yamunacharya for his kindness, sympathy and encouragement in the preparation of this book.

My sincere thanks are due to the following editors, who graciously consented to reproduce the papers here, which were earlier published in their journals. I am thankful to the Editors of i) Sociology and Applied Research, Jabalpur University; 2) Arts Journal, Mysore University; 3) Eastern Anthropologist, Lucknow; 4) Indian Journal of Social Research, Meerut; 5) Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay; and 6) Indian Sociological Bulletin, Delhi. Also whole/part of the papers read at the Social Scientists Conference, 1965, Patna University and Eighth All India Sociological Conference, 1968, Agra, are included.

I thank Shri G. H. Rama Rao, Mysore Publishing and Printing House for printing the book despite some difficulties.

I thank, the Popular Prakashan for having readily undertaken the publication of the book.

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INTRODUCTION

The sociological essays on Veerasaivism is a collection of essays which were originally published in different journals between 1964-68.¹ Some essays have been reproduced with little or no modifications, while in other cases suitable modifications are effected to substantiate the theme. The Veerasaivas or Lingayats², constitute one of the dominant caste-groups in Mysore State. A good deal of philosophical treatment of the tenets of Veerasaivism is readily available. But there is very little sociological/anthropological study of empirical data on Veerasaivas. The essays attempt to fill the gap in this field to some extent.

Historically Veerasaivism owes its rapid growth to the 12th century rebellious-reformist movement lead by Basava and his followers. But the orthodox Veerasaivas disclaim Basava as the founder of the faith. While it is not my purpose here to account for the origin of the faith, basing my arguments on empirical facts I conclude that Veerasaivism as is found today owes a good deal to the systematic teachings and conversions to the faith effected during and since the time of Basava.

Claims to antiquity to legitimize the sectarian movements is a familiar method. But such mythical claims are not historical. It becomes clear later in the essays that Veerasaivism in practice is at variance with its theology. My purpose here is to examine the social implications of Veerasaivism.

The Veerasaiva movement had for its object to establish a classless society. It rebelled against the caste hierarchy and social inequalities upheld by Brahmanical Hinduism.³ However, the social philosophy of Veerasaivism over a period of time has undergone considerable changes. Instead of abolition of social

¹ Acknowledgement of various sources is given at the beginning.

² I use Veerasaiva and Lingayat as interchangeable terms.

³ I use Brahmanical, Traditional and Sanskritic Hinduism as interchangeable terms.

inequalities, the movement succeeded in adding a few more new castes and sub-castes. For today Veerasaivism is functioning precisely on the basis of caste stratification common to Brahmanical Hinduism.

The structural analysis of Veerasaiva castes and sub-castes highlights the various principles underlying differentiation among the sub-castes. Although Veerasaivas have no traditional occupation, yet there are occupational groups among them. For instance, Banajigas are traders, while the Shivasimpigas follow tailoring as their occupation. Customary differences provide further basis for sub-caste differentiation as among the Panchachara and Sadaru. On the whole the movement lead to a further proliferation of castes and sub-castes.

Despite the continuity of caste principles and traditions the new faith did initiate changes in a large measure especially in relation to outlook on economic activities, and life in general. The Veerasaiva domestic ritualism is more secular compared to Brahmanical Hinduism. The notions of ritual purity and pollution are less marked in Veerasaivism. The point of departure between traditional Hinduism and Veerasaivism is discernible in the life crises and domestic rituals. The notion of ritual pollution at best is of marginal importance only. A consideration of girl's puberty ceremony substantiates this.

As a reformist movement Veerasaivism effected many sided changes. The religious freedom of sexes, contrasts favourably with traditional Hinduism. With the investiture of personal *Lingam* soon after birth, an individual becomes a Lingayat and remains and dies as a Lingayat. Age, sex and status differential tion do not affect the individual Lingayat as in Brahmanical Hinduism. Veerasaivism assumes the 'purity of mankind' at least of those who are born into and profess the faith.

Sanskritization, the indogenous process to raise higher from lower caste status by approximating to Brahmanical styles—stereotypes—of life is not exactly applicable to Veerasaivism. From its beginnings—and still—it contended against Brahmanical superiority. The Veerasaivas are anti-Brahmanical and anti-Sanskritic is borne out by their domestic ritual complex and other practices.

Veerasaivism differs from traditional Hinduism in a number of ways. In Brahmanical Hinduism, the maintenance of ritual purity, for instance is of utmost importance. Even such natural biological processes as birth, death, menstruation cause ritual pollution necessitating segregation of persons for a fixed period before purification is effected. Veerasaivism do not recognize ritual pollution and in practice it is considerably relaxed. One do not come across elaborate ritual observances in connection with birth and death among the Veerasaivas.

Further the Veerasaiva attitude to work and morals is much more rational and liberal. By advocating that one should find heaven in work, Veerasaivism infused a sense of secularism as against the "other worldiness" emphasized in Brahmanical Hinduism. The philosophy of following a vocation and emphasis on worldly activities provided a new axis in contrast to traditional Hinduism and other reformist movements.

Perhaps due to historical processes Veerasaivism could not develop a strong and centrally organised religious authority. This has added a dimension to the liberal attitude. Social occasions and moral lapses inviting strictures and censures among the Brahmanical caste-groups are not viewed seriously among the Veerasaivas. These are considered insignificant and ignored. The absence of caste councils among the Lingayats and lack of control by the religious authority account for a good deal of personal freedom and freedom from the "irksome fetters" binding persons.

The last two essays deal with the growing caste consciousness and consciousness of caste strength among the Lingayats. Since 1956, the Lingayats constitute the largest single community in Mysore State. The widely scattered Lingayat groups from former Hyderabad, Madras and Bombay Karnatak areas were merged on the basis of the States' Reorganization Act. Since then the Lingayats provide political leadership at the State level.

The above facts have had their impact on Lingayats wherever they also constitute a numerical majority as it is in Kshetra. The local Lingayats have made it no secret while attempting to capture political power in the village panchayat. They

are already economically dominant and claim ritual equality with the Kshatriyas. If the Lingayats succeed in dominating the village politically, they believe, that they can bring about changes in the Kshatriya controlled temple administration and its resources.

For a long time the Lingayats disputed and contented the Kshatriya ownership of the Kshetra Linga temple. They always couched their arguments on religious basis while the real interest was centred on the economic assets of the temple. The Kshatriyas however, finally succeeded in establishing their claims to the temple.

As the temple proprietorship has become a settled matter, the Lingayat antagonism towards Kshatriyas is on the increase. In recent years they are trying to acquire political leadership. For nearly two decades, since the introduction of the Statutory Panchayat, a Kshatriya elder is the Panchayat President.

The 1960 Village Panchayat elections saw the formation of a Lingayat party to oppose the President's party. The outcome of the elections was quite discouraging to the Lingayat party. The President's party as a whole won the elections. The Lingayat members of the President's party were crucial in bringing about the total defeat of the opposition Lingayat party. The President is judicious in keeping the pro and anti-Kshatriya Lingayats divided amongst themselves.

The temple and temple lands set a limit to the political and economic aspirations of the Lingayats. Appealing to the people in the name of the deity and similar devices influence the electoral behaviour and swings it in favour of the Kshatriyas. The fertile black cotton soil temple lands are inalienable and this has created scarcity of available land in the village. As a major cultivating group the Lingayats are affected and they remain thwarted.

Despite economic and ritual interdependence, anity and solidarity of the village, the inter-caste role-relationships are not always smooth. There are occasions marked by strains and tensions. Agricultural economy which thrives on local skills and specialist services can hardly function on ruptured relationships and continued conflict. Kshetra has faced stresses and strains but is amenable to changes.

CHAPTER I

VEERASAIVISM: ITS HISTORY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Veerasaivism is a Sectarian and Anti-Brahmanical movement of the 12th Century. The movement started in the Deccan and spread to other parts of South India. It was a heterodox sect which rebelled against the rigid caste system and other practices.

In the Brahmanical caste system, the ritual status of caste and individuals within the caste depends upon a variety of criteria. One of the most important criteria consists in the maintenance of 'ritual purity' as opposed to 'ritual pollution'.² The 'pure' and 'impure' status of individuals is rigidly defined. Life crises such as birth and death are considered polluting, hence the need for purification.

The core of the Veerasaiva teachings is their refusal to recognize the concept of ritual pollution basic to Brahmanical Hinduism. Veerasaivism proclaimed the non-observance of five kinds of pollution.³ They are pollution based on caste distinctions, birth, death, spittle and menstruation (*Jati, Janana, Preta Uchchista* and *Rajasa Sutaka*).

Non-observance of caste distinctions based on ritual status is retained only in theory by the Veerasaivas. In practice, today, the Veerasaivas recognize caste distinctions. That the rank of a caste in the hierarchy is based on ritual status is maintained by the Veerasaivas with reference to other castes as well as among themselves. Veerasaivism includes within itself a number of castes and subcastes which form a hierarchy based on differential ritual status.

Early writers and some of the modern Anthropological monographs⁴ refer to Veerasaivas as a dissident Hindu Sect, who constitute a ritual group opposed to Brahmanical castes, with a priestly caste among themselves. Jangam, the Veerasaiva priestly caste officiates among all ranks of Veerasaivas, non-Veerasaivas including Untouchables. The ritually self-contained Veerasaiva

Community thus claim to stand on an equal footing with the twice-born. Veerasaivas as a group stand in opposition to the twice-born in many ways. The two groups neither interdine nor intermarry. They do not accept ritual services from one another. They are mutually exclusive though both profess vegetarianism and teetotalism.

One of the most important features of Veerasaivism consists in the wearing of personal *lingam*, the emblem of God Shiva on the body of every member of the faith irrespective of age, sex and status. Among the twice-born, wearing the sacred thread is confined to men while age and sex differences are marked. In contrast to Brahmanical Hinduism, Veerasaivism firmly believes in the 'purity of mankind'⁵. The Veerasaiva by virtue of wearing the personal *lingam* always remain ritually pure and seldom contracts ritual pollution.

Since both men and women wear personal *lingam* and worship it daily, there is a sense of equality of sexes in religious plane in Veerasaivism. A Veerasaiva woman can undertake religious observances independently. This is denied to her Brahmin-sisters whose ritual status is essentially inferior to men. She cannot normally undertake religious observances on her own. Further in Brahmanical Hinduism, woman is not entitled to undergo initiation, which alone alters the status from 'once-born' to 'twice-born'. She is considered a source of pollution at puberty, menstruation and child-birth. A Veerasaiva women do not face these hardships of pollution.

All life crisis ceremonies among the Veerasaivas hardly involve notions of pollution to the extent it obtains in Brahmanical Hinduism. Death among the Veerasaivas is construed as union with Shiva or *Lingam* (*Shivaikya* or *Lingaikya*). Elaborate mortuary rites, ritual mourning; a striking feature of Brahmanical Hinduism thus does not obtain in Veerasaivism. Use of fire is associated with sacrifice in vedic rites and Veerasaivism is opposed both to vedas and sacrifice in theory as well as in practice. Veerasaivas use the sacred lamp (*Kalasa*) and not fire on auspicious occasions.

The rapid growth and spread of Veerasaivism was due to the teachings of Basava and his followers in vernacular during the

12th Century. Basava himself was a Saiva Brahmin by birth. He rebelled against the Brahmanical orthodoxy and expounded the Veerasaiva philosophy. Mass conversions from other castes to Veerasaivism took place during and after the time of Basava.

The orthodox among the Veerasaivas assert that Veerasaivism is not a sectarian and anti-Brahmanical movement of the 12th century, but existed from the earliest times. In support of this the myth of the five great spiritual teachers (*Pancha Acharyas*) in all *Yugas*, the Hindu time-scale of *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dwapara* and *Kali* is cited. It is said that these Teachers established five great thrones at five different places in North and South India to perpetuate the Veerasaiva faith. The myth in short tries to establish that Veerasaivism is as ancient and as widespread as the Brahmanical religion itself. But the claims to antiquity are obvious and hence to be treated as such.

Veerasaivism was at once a rebellious and a reformist movement. It rebelled against orthodox Hinduism with its rigid caste system upholding the inequality of man, and denounced vedic Brahmanical practices such as animal sacrifices and notions of ritual pollution. The conversion from other castes to Veerasaivism however, brought about a further proliferation of castes and sub-castes, which practice endogamy, follow different occupations, and recognize traditional and customary differences among themselves.

Veerasaiva movement fits in perfectly with the following observations of Max Weber. Weber says, "the sect developing into a caste needs only to be interested in securing its social rank over and against other castes. There is no obstacle to this; indeed there are Hindu castes which repudiate the Brahmin for their own priests. In the course of time the sect can be recognized either as a single caste (sect-caste) or as a caste with sub-castes of differential social rank. This last occurs when the sect members are socially quite heterogeneous." The history of Veerasaiva movement highlight these aspects in particular as can be gathered by a structural analysis of Veerasaivism. While discussing the social structure I draw upon the field material from Kshetra, a village in Bellary District of Mysore State.

In Kshetra there are four Veerasaiva caste-groups with a num-

ber of sub-castes among themselves. The details of population, landholding, approximate hierarchical position of castes with their occupation is laid down in the table below.

Table No. 1. Hierarchy and other Details among the Veerasaivas

Caste groups	Households	Population	Percentage	Landholding Acres-Cents	Percentage	Occupation
1. Jangam	6	27	1.4	14.00	—	Priest
2. a) Panchachara-Lingayat	133	734	38.0	1405.43	57.8	Agriculture
b) Hande Rahuta	1	5	0.3	—	—	Agriculture (Cowherd)
c) Banajiga	16	73	3.8	86.00	7.4	Trading
d) Sivasimpiga	4	35	1.8	32.00		Tailoring
e) Sadaru	8	38	2.0	47.00		Agriculture
3. Potter Lingayat	1	5	0.3	2.00		Manufacturing earthen pots
4. Barber Lingayat	2	15	0.7	—		Haircutting
	171	932	48.3	1586.43	65.2	

In Kshetra some 18 caste-groups with a number of sub-castes within themselves are distributed in 358 households, with a population of 1929, holding nearly 2431 acres of dry cultivable land. Stated in terms of percentage Veerasaivas with 171 households and a population of 932 own 1586 acres of land. While 34.8 percent of the land is distributed among 14 caste-groups with a population of 51.7 percent distributed in 187 households.

Although Veerasaivism frowned upon rigid caste hierarchy and preached 'brotherhood' of mankind but in actual practice, it is not exactly so. As it appears from Table-1, that there are four major Veerasaiva caste-groups in Kshetra, between whom there are occupational, customary and other differences. Even the five sub-cases in the second caste-group follow different occupations and customs. While endogamy is by and large the rule

that governs all castes and subcastes, interdining is practised only in recent years. I shall give below a brief account of the possible causes that lead to the formation of different castes and sub-castes even in a reformist sectarian movement.

The Social Structure among Lingayats

The Jangams; Lingayat Priests, as a caste were given an exalted position during the 12th Century by Basava and his followers, the exponents of the tenets of Veerasaivism. The spread of Veerasaivism keeping the *Agamas* in view assumed the existence of the Jangam caste. Basava stressed the importance of *guru* (spiritual teacher), *Linga* (symbol of Shiva) and Jangama. The Jangams today occupy a key ritual position among Lingayats and some non-Lingayat caste-groups.

Jangams are usually domestic priests or heads of Mutts and not temple priests. In both the capacities they collect ceremonial fee (*dakshine*) from their Lingayat disciples. Jangams also go about begging in the country-side every Monday, the favourite day for Shiva and during the month of *Shravana*. They interdine with all the Lingayats except the Lingayat Barbers in Kshetra. Theoretically, Jangams and all Lingayats are vegetarians and teetotallers. Jangams can seek brides from among the ranks of Lingayats, although no Lingayat would dare consider marrying a Jangam girl. This is because the Jangams address the Lingayats as *Sishya Makkalu* (disciples-cum-children). Therefore, it would be wrong and immoral for a disciple to marry from among his guru, in other words, his spiritual teacher, while reverse is not taboo.

A Jangam undergoes initiation (*Iyyachara*) and then only he can play a full ritual role on all ceremonial and life crises occasions in Lingayat households. A Lingayat disciple addresses a Jangam as *guru*, *buddhi* and *do padapuja* (worship his feet) to him. The two important ritual acts which a Jangam normally undertake in Lingayat households is giving water used for washing his feet (*Padodaka*) which thus becomes consecrated and is sipped by the Lingayats. The ceremonial coconut water (*Karuna Prasada*) is given exclusively to Lingayats and this consists of coconut water poured between his feet and collected

in a plate, a few drops of water are used in worshipping the personal *Lingam* and the rest sipped by Lingayat disciples.

An uninitiated Jangam cannot get married or assume to play many ritual roles. At birth, death, marriage and girls' puberty, the role of Jangam is very important in Lingayat households. He will also purify a house contaminated by the passing of a crow or the hooting of an owl. But should he be bitten by a dog he himself is defiled beyond purification, so that he cannot play ritual roles any more. Likewise any physical deformity as having one eye or crippled leg disqualifies him from playing ritual roles. There are many occupational sub-castes among Jangams ; such as those who foretell (Gandujolige Iyyappa) or those who annoint the stone image of *Lingam* with 'Kante' paste (Kante Iyyappa). They interdine but do not intermarry.

The Panchachara, and other sub-castes in group two practise endogamy and there are occupational and customary differences between them. Tailoring is the caste occupation of Sivasimpigas who also own and cultivate land in Kshetra. The clan exogamy and sub-caste endogamy is in vogue among them. Only in recent years they have started accepting food from other sub-castes in the group. While none of these sub-castes accept food from the Barbers, although they accept his normal and ritual services.

The Banajigas have further sub-castes like Kori Setti, Pavada Setti, Pattana Setti and so forth. In the village Banajigas are mostly traders who own and run grocery shops. In addition they also cultivate some land. The Banajigas admit the ritual superiority of the Panchachara who could be grafted on to the Jangams-Priestly-order and become heads of Mutts. But in practice the Banajigas discriminate against the Panchachara. The Banajigas say that they are more punctilious as regards cleanliness and ritual observances while the Panchachara are 'dirty' and 'irregular' in these matters.

At the turn of the 20th century a Banajiga never interdined with the Panchachara and in the early 1930's a scrupulous Banajiga chose to leave the village instead of consenting to eat at Panchachara houses and submit to their juridical authority which the latter exercised by virtue of being the single largest

community with landed wealth, with educated youngmen, otherwise hard working and enterprising, who have developed awareness of local and state political situation.

Today commensal and connubial relations between the sub-castes are relaxed. One of the local Jangams derided the pretensions of the sub-divisions and the sub-caste of Banajigas in claiming superiority and discriminating against the Panchachara. The Banajigas were described as those fit to carry the dead ass (*Satta Katte horuvavaru*), implying thereby that inspite of them being punctilious and clean their ritual status is very low compared to the Panchachara. Banajigas cannot join the ranks of the priestly caste.

The Handerahuta sub-caste has few representatives in Bellary and Dharwar Districts. They are agriculturists, and practice sub-caste endogamy, but interdine with other Lingayats with the exception of Barbers.

The Panchachara and Sadaru sub-castes constitute contending parties claiming superiority against each other. The Panchachara say, that they are the immediate disciples of the five Jangams who established illustrious Mutts in Kedara, Benaras, Ujjaini, Srisaila and Balehalli, the first two in North India and the remaining in Mysore State. The Sadaru claim equal antiquity to challenge the former.

The heads of two mutts also encourage their followers to challenge one another. Followers of these mutts in Mysore State often collide than come to terms with one another on public occasions like the local and general elections to the State and the Central Legislatures, etc.

The two sub-castes do not intermarry and only recently they have started interdining. The Panchachara never used to serve food in bronze plates, even when the Sadaru were invited for dinner. This kind of discrimination lead to resentment and sharp reaction which in due course of time assumed big proportions, leading to open conflict as it happened between the two sub-castes at Uttangi in Bellary District in 1932, when the government gave armed protection to Sadaru to take their *guru* in a procession.

The Sadaru deride the Panchachara as Panchama Sale, Sale meaning weavers, while the Sadaru are described as '*Madaru*'

(Madiga) after an Untouchable caste. The real distinction and differences between them are customary rather than occupational. They both practice agriculture, yet wherever Sadaru are in majority, instead of taking the priestly services of a 'hereditary Jangam' they initiate (*Diksha*) one of their family member to play ritual roles and have thus developed a separate priestly caste among them.

The difference between the two sub-castes could be explained away in terms of distant past when Veerasaivism made rapid strides because masses of people were converted from different castes to Veerasaivism by Basava and his followers. These preachers although united in expounding a new philosophy undoubtedly came from different social backgrounds. Since Veerasaivism itself was at once a rebellious and reformist movement, it is possible that some of the preachers were radical, others conservative and still others followed a middle path. For some of the preachers might have been rebels against and others just reformers of orthodox Hinduism.

The Panchachara of today came under the radical teachings, gave up the past and welcomed radical changes. The Panchachara do not have a clan system and in Kshetra they constitute the "versatile" and easily the richest and powerful group. In contrast those who constitute Sadaru sub-caste took to Veerasaiva Philosophy without discarding the old practices. Today Sadaru still have a clan system (*Bedagu*) on a par with other low castes. Clan exogamy is in practice. Such customary differences widen when secular factors like wealth, education, political awareness are associated. This is a very simplified picture of the Veerasaiva social structure in Kshetra village.

The two other castes, the Potters and Barbers are occupational groups. The Potter manufactures earthen pots and pans and supplies them to his patrons on customary terms. No social and ritual discrimination is made against the Potter by the other Lingayats. The Jangam offers his priestly services and others accept food from him.

The Barber Lingayats are barbers by profession and Lingayats by religion. They accept the ritual services of a Jangam and eat only from the Lingayat households. The ritual and normal

services of a Barber are available to all Lingayats and the twice-born, non-Lingayat caste-groups with the exception of Untouchables. Yet none, not even the Untouchables accept food from a Barber's kitchen. The Jangam who invariably eats a ritual meal in all Lingayat households while officiating as a priest, do not eat in a barber's house. The Lingayats also discriminate against the Barber. The Jangam and other Lingayats are agreeable to interdine with the Barber provided the Barber confined his services only to the Lingayat community. This would involve economic losses to the Barber.

It is only the services of a Barber which are still indispensable both on normal and ritual occasions in the village. His services are on hereditary basis and he is paid annually in kind by his patrons. This being so, he occupies a position in the social hierarchy which at once identifies him with Lingayats, because of his religious beliefs and practices, yet all castes including Untouchables discriminate against him by refusing to eat food from his kitchen and invariably consider it as an ill-omen, though his touch in itself is not necessarily considered defiling.

In this short paper attempt has been made to account for a few internal structural principles which have been responsible for crystalizing castes and sub-castes among lingayats. Sectarian and reformist movements which recruit their followers from different castes, could not eradicate caste system, but it only lead to its proliferation. This is borne out by the study of Lingayats. The above fact can be testified among the sikhs and also other reformist movements in North India.

The data analysed here is based on field work in Kshetra, a village in Bellary District of Mysore State. In 1953, upon the formation of the first Linguistic State-Andhra Pradesh-some Taluks of Bellary District merged with Mysore. In 1956 the States' Reorganization Committee brought about a further enlargement of the old Mysore State. The predominantly Lingayat areas of Bombay Karnatak and other Kannada-speaking areas, upon merger with Mysore have changed the State's political scene. In this Lingayats are providing leadership at state level and they are the single largest community - albeit with innumerable sub-castes - constituting about 20 per cent of

the State's population. Measures are afoot to bring about greater unity, solidarity and internal organization among the Lingayats in general. But sub-caste feelings die-hard and they come to fore surprisingly on occasions like general elections and other public occasions.

2. Stevenson, H.N.C., "*Status Evaluation in the Hindu Caste System*" *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1954, Vol : 84, pp 45-65.

3. Artal R.C. "A short Account of the Reformed Shaiva or Veerasaiva Faith" *Journal of the Anthropological Society*, Bombay, 1909 No. 3 pp. 171-262.

4. Srinivas, M. N., 1955, "The Social System of a Mysore Village" in *Village India* Ed. Marriott.

5. Nandimath, S.C., 1942 *A Hand Book of Veerasaivism* p. 38.

6. Weber Max, 1938,

CHAPTER II

VEERASAIIVAS AND THE PROCESSES OF SANSKRITIZATION AND WESTERNIZATION

Here I shall elaborate on one of the concepts already current in Indian Sociological literature. I will delineate below, the different usages of Sanskritisation linking it with Westernisation and the so-called 'Modernisation'.

The concept of Sanskritisation was first formulated by Prof. M. N. Srinivas, while he was writing on the Coorg religion and rituals in the early 1950's. Subsequently, he also published an Article on 'Sanskritisation and Westernisation'¹ in the *Far Eastern Quarterly* during 1956.

The concept of Sanskritisation and Westernisation, especially Sanskritisation has been criticised as an inadequate and awkward term by many Indian social scientists (including Srinivas) ever since its formulation. It has been suggested to use the term 'Modernisation' instead. However, I find that Sanskritisation and Westernisation could be still retained as useful concepts by Indianists.

Sanskritisation is a blanket-term which describes the processes of change and mobility within Hindu society and Sanskritisation itself has a set of attributes. It would be fruitful to examine how it is operating from centuries past. Srinivas writes of Sanskritisation as a process whereby members of lower castes usually try to 'identify' or 'imitate' the behaviour and values of the higher or highest castes in the caste hierarchy. Since the top rank in the caste hierarchy has been generally held by Brahmins, Brahmanical values, such as Vegetarianism, Teetotalism, notions of ritual purity and pollution and such other practices have a high value in Hindu society. Hence the efforts on the part of

¹ Srinivas, 1956, 'A Note on Sanskritisation and Westernisation' in *The Far Eastern Quarterly*. Vol. xv, No. 4.

See further by the same author "the cohesive role on Sanskritisation" 1966, Mimeograph, Delhi University.

lower castes to 'imitate' Brahmanical behaviour in order to move up in the caste hierarchy. Srinivas himself has demonstrated it for Coorgs and Amma Coorgs¹, the highly Brahmanically-oriented section of the Coorgs. Prof. Bailey has also pointed out the success of the process for the Boad Distillers against the Warriors and its failure among the untouchables against the caste Hindus in Bisipara.

Sanskritisation is a cultural concept employed to describe the structural relationships in Indian Society. I take 'Sanskritisation' to represent 'Ideal Hinduism' (like Weber's Ideal Types). Ideal Hinduism would include the complex phenomena of sanskritisation described by Srinivas so far, plus the attributes of *Varna: Asrama Dharma* (caste and stages of life).

'The agents of sanskritisation were (and are) not always Brahmins'².

This being so, Brahmins and other twice-born castes, according to my definition, are pro-sanskritic (but in varying degrees i.e., some being more sanskritic than others), approximating to the 'Ideal Type' individuals who try to break through the 'tradition' tend to 'de-sanskritise'.

'Brahmanisation is subsumed in the wider process of sanskritisation though at some points Brahmanization and Sanskritisation are at variance with each other'.⁴

The villagers, whenever they come across a person trying to 'copy' the Brahmanical 'style of life' frequently say, that one acts like a Brahmin (*Brahmanara hage aduvudu*). Depending upon the context and person's reputation, such attributes may be a mark of appreciation or derision. I will give an example of each case from Kshetra, the village I have studied in Mysore State, to illustrate how it operates.

C. a Talawari (low caste Hindu), minor official in the Local Electric Department was very punctilious. He cooked his meals himself, never ate his lunch without taking a bath. He used to observe a partial fast on Saturdays and visit Kshetra Linga temple to offer worship. Ritual scrupulousness pervaded

¹ Srinivas, 1952, *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India*.

² Bailey, F.G., 1957, *Caste & The Economic Frontier*.

³ & ⁴ Srinivas, 1956, *Loc. Cit.*, p. 481.

his activities. He was admired as a good and modest man by the Kshatriya youths and others in the village.

In contrast to C, B, a middle-aged Untouchable Kanchaveera from Kshetra, who had served a ten-year sentence for a murder in the District Jail was released and came back to Kshetra during June 1960. He used to dress in *Khaddar* and wear a 'Gandhi cap'. He pretended that he had forgotten his mother-tongue (Kannada) and he always appeared smartly dressed. He boasted a lot about his good experience in the jail and his polished manners. Villagers and Kshatriya youths in particular ridiculed him as 'Jail-made-Brahmin'.

The above two instances are not sufficient to demonstrate (although they serve my purpose here) the complex set of factors which are involved in a situation when a man's 'Brahmin Stereotype' behaviour is admired or criticised adversely. It may be caste status or food habits, or maintaining ritual purity or even personal cleanliness as having a daily bath and wearing clean clothes that calls for the attention of the villagers.

Further in this instance both C and B are of low caste, who are neither vegetarians nor teetotallers. But C ranks above the 'Pollution barrier', while B is Untouchable. The structural distance between an untouchable and a Brahmin is marked and so also the differences in their expected behaviour. The caste Hindus could easily perceive the attempts of B to imitate and show off 'Brahmanical behaviour'. The idiosyncracies of B and his overt efforts to impress people evoked ridicule if not antagonism. C, on the other hand did not show extremes of behaviour nor did he make overt attempts to imitate 'Brahmin stereotype'. He also drew public attention, but it was of a different kind.

Where people imitate Brahmins and try to impress others by such 'exhibitionism'—as in the case of B—they allow themselves to be ridiculed. In contrast, individuals like C, who approximate to the Brahmin stereotype for its own sake, and do not assert superiority or exhibit themselves before others, are admired and respected or at least not adversely criticised in public. Such is the case of Boad outcaste schoolmaster in Bisipara.¹

¹ Bailey, F.G., 1957, *Op. Cit.*, p. 222

'A-Sanskritic' and 'non-Sanskritic' can be used to describe groups entirely alien to Hinduism, such as Muslims and Christians. Here again, the Indian Christians may be described as A-Sanskritic, while the European Missionaries are non-Sanskritic.

Mariage, the status of women and kinship—the stringent rules—among the Brahmins are analysed by Srinivas and are contrasted with the practices of non-Brahmanical castes. The three concepts overlap and in analysing my data on the Veerasaivas of Kshetra, I have dwelt on these and connected topics which lead me to characterise the Veerasaiva ritual as 'Anti-Sanskritic'.

'The Lingayats of South India have been a powerful force for the Sanskritisation of the customs and rites of many low castes of the Karnatak. The Lingayat movement was anti-Brahmanical in tone and spirit.'¹

The phrase 'anti-Brahmanical in tone and spirit' tends to overlook the practical aspects of the movement. In addition, two opposing principles are juxtaposed when the movement is described as anti-Brahmanical but a powerful force for sanskritisation. To resolve this contradiction, it is necessary to analyse, 'why and how' the Veerasaiva movement is (and was) anti-Brahmanical. The leaders of the Lingayat movement, Basava and his followers condemned some aspects of Sanskritic Hinduism. The ritual observances of the Veerasaivas at birth, puberty menstruation, death and the role of the domestic priest are opposed to Sanskritisation and are therefore, 'anti-Sanskritic'.

The 'ritual culture' of the Veerasaivas (if I may put it that way) is different from the Brahmanical 'ritual culture'. It is appropriate to describe the Veerasaivas as anti-Sanskritic as well as anti-Brahmanical rather than anti-Brahmanical but pro-Sanskritic.

The Lingayats of South India are rivals to the ritual Superiority of the twice-born castes, and in this the Veerasaivas are ritually a 'self-contained' caste-group. They neither interdine with the Brahmins nor accept their ritual services.

¹ Srinivas, *Loc. Cit.*, p. 482.

The Panchalas, the five artisan castes; the carpenter, blacksmith, goldsmith, worker in bell-metal and stone-masons, are in fact a ritually 'self-contained' group. They do not accept food or ritual services from the Brahmins. They too claim equality with the Brahmins. But somehow the assertions of the Veerasaivas against Brahmins seem to have gained ground through the centuries while the assertions of the Panchalas have not.

It is interesting to delineate the two streams of divergency to show the Panchalas are 'pro-Sanskritic' and not anti-Brahmanical', whereas the Veerasaivas are both 'anti-Sanskritic and anti-Brahmanical'. That the Panchalas wear the sacred thread and their domestic rituals— notions of ritual purity and pollution—closely resemble the Brahmanical model are sufficient to explain them as 'pro-Sanskritic' although they belong to left-hand caste-groups.

Veerasaivism is a sectarian movement which condemned the rigidity of the Brahmanical caste system. The preachers of Veerasaiva tenets not only expounded a new philosophy, but they used an approach unheard of in Brahmanical castes i.e. converting people of other castes to Veerasaivism. The numerical strength of the Veerasaiva caste increased as a result of this. Hence it gained sufficient ground to challenge, assert and retain its anti-Brahmanical approach. In contrast, we have not heard so far of a similar religious movement among the Panchalas against the Brahmins nor is the technique of converting people to increase the strength of the caste evident among Panchalas.

Both Veerasaivas and Panchalas accept Vegetarianism and teetotalism in principle. Vegetarianism and teetotalism are not sufficient to make a group Brahmanically-oriented. I suggest that Vegetarianism and teetotalism as exclusive Brahmanical traits, adoption of which as facilitating upward mobility of low castes, should be accepted with caution if not abandoned altogether. To claim vegetarianism and teetotalism as exclusive Brahmanical traits is misleading particularly in the light of the knowledge that Brahmins eat meat in Bisipara, and elsewhere Kshatriyas drink alcohol.

We should attempt to find out other important features which

might put us in a better position to characterize a caste as 'pro-Sanskritic'. Both these processes may eventually lead to higher status of the caste-groups in the hierarchy as is evident from the Panchalas and Veerasaivas.

It is possible to demarcate the pro-Sanskritic from the anti-Sanskritic tendencies by analysing the domestic ritualism of caste-groups concerned. The Marathas of Kshetra, for instance, are pro Sanskritic, although they eat meat and drink alcohol. The Marathas wear the sacred thread, they accept only a Brahmin's ritual services and their domestic ritual complex is modelled on Brahmanical conception of ritual purity and pollution. In contrast, the Kurubas of Kshetra are anti-Sanskritic. The Kurubas also eat meat and drink alcohol. But they do not wear the sacred thread. They accept a Jangam's-Lingayat Priest-ritual services and their domestic rituals are modelled on those of the Veerasaivas.

The economic, political and ritual inter-dependence of castes are important criteria to understand the 'structure in action' in rural areas. The economic and political relationships between castes frequently come to fore. In this, with the accumulation of wealth (as among the Boad Distillers of Bisipara) caste-groups assert their independence and tend to be pro-Sanskritic (the-accepted avenue to higher status in the caste hierarchy in a tradition-oriented society) or anti-Sanskritic.

Religious differences among castes find their best expression when the castes in question challenge one another's superiority and compete for power. Competition for power again finds expression in political and economic arenas. The economic and political motivations accentuate religious differences and the contending parties emphasize the religious dichotomy in order to further economic and political ends.

Sectarian movements within Hinduism (both pro-Sanskritic as well as anti-Sanskritic) are not merely religious movements. In their attempt to repudiate or approximate traditional Hinduism, groups broke off from the parental stock often by declining to submit to the juridical authority of the parental stock. This is true of Veerasaivas and Amma Coorgs and many others.

Sanskritisation is an indigenous usage employed in describing

the process of upward mobility of low castes. It is mostly applicable to group mobility although occasionally it might also help individual mobility. Individual mobility can take the religious form of an individual becoming an ascetic and thus commanding respect by all castes.

The concept of 'dominant' caste is very important to understand the process of mobility through sanskritisation or otherwise. Economically dominant castes, provided they are above the 'pollution barrier', usually acquire political dominance and they may either Sanskritise their rituals and beliefs or be anti-Sanskritic. If this is buttressed by numerical dominance, formal education, official contacts and so forth, they actually set the 'patterns of life' for other and less important castes.

In North Mysore for example, most of the lower castes come under the influence of Lingayats and in most cases their rituals are modelled after the Lingayat pattern. While in South Mysore the Okkaligas have come under Brahmanical influence and have Sanskritised their domestic rituals after the Brahmins. But if the bulk of people in U. P. as Srivastav describes¹ try to identify themselves with the Kshatriyas and not with Brahmins or Vaishyas, it cannot be described as a process of 'De-Sanskritisation' or 'Kshatriyaisation'. It is important to know the domestic ritualism of such castes before describing the process. I suggest that it is still a variant form of Sanskritisation where Kshatriyas, as one of the twice-born castes, uphold the Brahmanical values and thus provide the pattern for low castes.

Westernisation as described by Srinivas may co-exist with Sanskritisation i.e. both pro-Sanskritisation and de-Sanskritisation could be accelerated by the impact of Westernisation. The Western educated Indians of the 19th and 20th centuries such as Ram Mohan Roy, S. C. Bose, Gandhi and Nehru and others provide outstanding examples of combining Westernisation with Sanskritisation. In fact, Gandhi himself provides us with an example of a person who first de-Sanskritised his dietetics to compete with the British, but later fused Sanskritic and Western ideas and ideals.

¹ Srivastav, 1963, "The Process of De-Sanskritisation in Village India" in *Anthropology of March*, pp. 263-67.

A-Sanskritic, non-Sanskritic and anti-Sanskritic tendencies are not only compatible with the process of Westernisation but by curious paradox might also include within themselves Sanskritic tendencies,

The usage of Modernization¹, however, cannot be used in the place of Sanskritisation and Westernisation. Attempts to build a unified state, with economic development and modifications in the social structure, ought to take into consideration the basic Indian ideals, the impact of non-Indians on Indians in the political, economic and religious spheres of life. I suggest that 'Modernisation be used to supplement or as a half-way measure between Sanskritisation and Westernisation. It is only this way modernization can become intelligible. The concept of Sanskritization and Westernization still provide the Indian Social Scientistists with a readily intelligible conceptual tool to demarcate the twin processes of change occurring concurrently in Indian society.

¹ Weiner, M., 1960, 'Politics of Modernisation' in *Leadership and Political Institutions in India*, pp. 18-38.

CHAPTER III

RITUAL PURITY AND POLLUTION; GIRLS PUBERTY CEREMONIES AMONG LINGAYATS AND KSHATRIYAS CASE STUDIES

Here I propose to describe the rites concerning girls' puberty among the Veerasaivas. Some rites were observed by me, others were described by my Lingayat informants. Although Lingayats are described as anti-Brahmanical and opposed to 'sanskritization' of customs and practices, it should become clear from the data presented below that Lingayats in fact are operating within the broad framework provided by the Brahmanical Hinduism. Life-cycle ceremony especially girls puberty is dramatized by the Lingayats just as among other castes.

Life-crisis ceremonies may be broadly categorised as those practised among the 'twice-born' and the 'once-born.' Initiation ceremony for twice born men, symbolises a spiritual re-birth as distinct from mere biological birth. All non-Brahmins have only "one birth" namely the biological. Among the Brahmanical castes, birth, death, a girl attaining puberty and menstruation causes ritual pollution. The persons who contract pollution in these 'natural' ways are segregated for a prescribed period, such as 11 days each for birth and death, 3 days for puberty and menstruation, because their touch is considered polluting. At the end of the prescribed period they take a purificatory bath and undergo other elaborate rites which will restore them to normal status. Among the non-Brahmanical castes also life-crises are looked upon as occasions causing ritual pollution. But the rigour with which they are observed among Brahmins is generally not found among non-Brahmins.

The notion of ritual pollution is markedly reduced among Lingayats and those castes of Karnatak (Mysore state), which have come under Veerasaiva influence. Birth and death involves very little that is comparable to Brahmanical notions of pollution, its duration, extent and elaborate rites. On these occasions,

a Jangam (Lingayat priest), the domestic priest visits the Veerasaiva household and performs one or two ritual acts with which the mother and child or the kin of the dead may said to be restored to normal status. However, there is no segregation, A menstruating woman is neither considered as contracting pollution nor her touch is polluting. She is not segregated. She goes about with her normal household work including cooking the food.

In contrast to the above, girls' puberty is ritualised, although a Lingayat girl does not undergo the rigours of seclusion and elaborate rites as her Brahmin sister. The most important thing that strikes one on these occasions to use Yalman's¹ description is that female sexuality is ritualised and offers an occasion for celebration and not merely the idea of pollution.

Gowri, a Lingayat girl about 13 years old attained puberty in Mid-May 1960. The menstrual stains were noticed by J, a Kshatriya woman and neighbour of the family. J intimated, S, the mother of Gowri around 10. O'clock in the morning. Upon this S made Gowri sit in the front corner of the house till 4 O'clock in the evening. S told me why she made Gowri sit for some hours. Firstly because it would be easily mid-day by the time preparations were made for preliminary ceremonies, mid-day being not very auspicious to start the ceremonies, A certain time interval-in this case 6 hours-was considered also necessary to make sure that the girl had attained maturity. During this period the girl may be given snacks but not lunch.

Around 4 O'clock the 'Hasiru-muttuva' ceremony (literally touching the green) was performed. Mrs. H, a paternal grandmother's-brother's-wife of Gowri led her to a Babul tree (*acacia arbica*) in a procession. The girl poured milk and ghi to the trunk of the tree and offered betel leaves and arecanuts and also two dry date fruits instead of plantains. She then waved lighted scented sticks to the tree. In short, she worshipped the tree (spirit?) and placed her right hand ceremonially on the trunk of the tree.

The above observance was described as a must to determine

¹ Yalman N. 1963, *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*. Vol. 93, Part 1. "On the Purity of women in the Castes of Ceylon and Malbar".

the quality of menses. If menses is of good variety i.e. *Hasi-muttu*- (literally wet menses) the tree will flourish. But if it is of bad kind i.e. *Onamuttu* (literally dry menses) the tree will die. The selection of thorny and not shady trees serves the purpose. Shady trees like neem are avoided in this test lest they should die. It does not matter much whether a thorny tree flourishes or perishes. Further rituals and native medicines would be prescribed to cure bad menses. In villages should a tree or plant die suddenly, especially a fruit-bearing tree or a flowering plant, people suspect that a menstruating-apparently dangerously bad-woman must have come in contact with it.

After the ritual touching of the tree, Gowri was led back home and straight away taken into the bath-room inside the house for a ceremonial bath. Milk, *Ghi* and cow's urine were mixed in a vessel and it was poured on her head by five married women (*Muthaides*). They also poured five vessels of water on the girl. Finally Mrs.H. assisted the girl to wash her long hair and bathe, while the other four women supplied hot water. This necessitated Mrs. H to come in contact with Gowri, not only on the first day but on subsequent four days also; while she always took a bath after assisting the bathing girl. The girl normally wore ordinary sometimes even old clothes to prevent good clothes being soiled by menstrual flow. As Gowri was already betrothed to her paternal grandfather's sister's son in the same village, the girl's father sent the message of Gowri coming of age to them through a Talawari (a low clean caste) man. The messenger was fed on varmicelli and other sweet dishes by the young man's family. Sweets are served to indicate happy news.

Once the news of Gowri attaining puberty became known, the young man to whom she was betrothed was sought after by his age mates, friends and even by women who stood in joking relationship. They all put red coloured water on him. *Okali* resembling the menstrual blood is a mixture of turmeric powder and lime solution, sometimes containing a few drops of oil to make the colour fast. Artificial red dyes were also used. The person subjected to this cannot object, although he can always try to escape by running away. The game of pouring *Okali* might last 3 to 8 days.

Meanwhile B, the would-be father-in-law of the girl consulted the Brahmin priest, to find out the constellations. Lingayats generally consult a Jangam for astrological calculations. In Kshetra no Jangam had any reputation for making such calculations, hence B went to C. Bhat. According to Bhat's findings the girl had attained maturity at an auspicious moment. Since the girl was wearing a white saree when she menstruated it was considered a good omen. The black border of the saree did not indicate anything harmful. For if it should, the astrologer would normally advise the party to give gifts to priests-Brahmins, Jangams to avert the accompanying evil. The Brahmin priest was given a ceremonial fee,—some cash : betel and nut.

After the bath Gowri was fed on vermicelli mixed with sugar, milk and *ghi* in a corner of the hall. On this occasion the girl should put the first five morsels of the dish into her mouth with three fingers only. After this she may taste hot side-dishes containing chillie-powder and spices. The same night at about 8.30 p.m. Gowri facing East was made to sit on a plank in the hall. A handful of rice, some dry date fruits, betel, whole areca nuts were put into her saree, which she tied into a bundle (*udi*). These things were preserved for the subsequent four days and finally they were given to the family washerwoman. Meanwhile Gowri was also given a wooden doll to hold in her hand. White rice was kept in 3 heaps before her along with a sacred lamp (*kalasa*). Married woman—at least minimum five of them—threw rice ceremonially on her head and waved the *kalasa* to Gowri and the doll. These are largely gatherings of women and children where men have little or no work. Gathered women usually sing puberty songs on the occasion. The evening celebrations had a meagre attendance during the first four days. The Lingayats as well as others considered it as 'pollution house' (*hole mane*) and hence many did not come forward to attend.

On the second day Gowri was given mere hot water bath she was given grated coconut, mixed with jaggery, crushed dry dates and *spices* and *ghi*. From now onward for nearly 4-5 weeks she is given nourishing food. She should be well fed and rested to overcome the fatigue of menstrual flow. A well balanced good diet will help the girl in several ways during her first maturity. As

the girl washes her hair daily she is in danger of catching cold or otherwise falling sick, hence rich and nourishing food is very necessary particularly during this period. Girls are supposed to grow well upon attaining maturity.

The second night Gowri underwent the simple *arti* ceremony as on the previous night. On the third day the family erected a pandal—*Mantap*—in the hall. The pandal was decorated with coloured paper, silk sarees, and pictures of various Hindu gods and goddesses. Even the pictures of national leaders—heroes—were used in decorating the pandal. Finally, the pandal was illuminated by multi-coloured electric bulbs. Inside the pandal a decorated wooden chair provided the seat for Gowri to undergo the ceremonies in the evening.

These rituals at night are a great fun to a majority of the gathered women. They generally sing puberty songs and joke with one another. Married women with living husbands throw rice ceremonially—*sese*—on the girl and then wave the sacred lamp (*kalasa*). The women will be invariably persuaded and sometimes compelled to utter the names of their husbands before resting the sacred lamp on a tripod stand. If any married man is around, he is invited to wave *arti* to the girl and cajoled to tell his wife's name. The family normally distributes betel and nut to the gathered people at the end of night rituals each day.

On the fourth day also the observations were similar to those held on previous days.

The fifth day is a day of some elaborate special rituals for the girl and her family. The ritual will effect purification from 'puberty pollution' enabling large scale participation by others in ceremonies held from now onwards.

All the four days Gowri's movements were restricted to the hall and the bothroom in the house. Whenever she went to attend calls-of-nature, not to a distant place outside the house, her mother, or some old woman usually accompanied her to the spot and came back with her.

On the fifth day the house was white-washed, floors were smeared with cowdung solution. The girl removed the old glass bangles—*hole bale*—and the bangle seller inserted new green bangles in her hands. The bangle seller was paid both in cash and kind on this occasion.

Towards the evening the family Jangam was invited by the family. The girl after having had a bath, upon the arrival of the Jangam received the consecrated water (*padodaka*, water with which the Jangam had washed his feet) from the Jangam and sipped it. The other members of the family also sipped the *Padodaka* and sprinkled it all over the place. Also Mrs. H. who had come in contact with Gowri all these days by assisting the latter to bathe received the *Padodaka* from the Jangam. It is important that she who assists a girl in puberty to bathe (*mutti eredavaru*) should receive and sip the consecrated water given by a Jangam.

The Jangam then prepared ceremonial coconut-water-*Karuna Prasada*-by pouring the coconut water between his feet and gave it to Gowri, Mrs. H. and other members of the family. The girl put a few drops of coconut water on her personal *Lingam* (*Istalinga* worn on the body) and worshipped it. The Jangam, Mrs. H. and the rest of the family feasted on special sweet dishes. Also the affines were treated to a feast on the day. With these rituals the girl was restored to her normal status. The girl however, wore the personal *Lingam* on her body throughout these days and worshipped it before each major meal. During this period the girl can even chew betel and nut after food, which is not usual for young girls.

On the 5th evening, the would-be-in-laws brought gifts of grated coconut mixed with jaggery, pieces of dry dates and so forth (*Kobbari Khara*). They also brought a new green saree and two blouse cloths to Gowri and another blouse cloth for Mrs. H. Gowri and Mrs. H were made to sit side by side inside the pandal when Gowri's would-be-sister-in-law ceremonially put some rice, 2 coconuts, 5 plantains, 5 dry dates and 5 copra halves, 5 lemons, betel and five whole areca nuts in a corner of Gowri's saree (*udiyakki tumbu*) and gave the saree and blouse cloth. Similarly Mrs. H. received the blouse cloth with a little rice, 2 dry dates, betel and nut. Her services on this occasion were publicly acknowledged before the gathered people.

It is from the 5th evening onwards, till the 16th day the puberty celebrations will be held on a grand scale. All these evenings the girl is dressed in costly silk sarees and jewellery

and 'impersonating' various mythological characters like Sita, Drupathi, Saraswathi, Laxmi and so forth, (the heroines of Ramayana, Mahabharata, goddess of learning, wealth). During this period the girl is usually invited for lunch and dinner by relatives, affines, caste people and sometimes by other caste also. The family friends, even those coming from lower castes, brought gifts of supplies to the girls family to feed her.

Normally before the fifth day rituals the girl will not go to other's houses for lunch or dinner, although others can bring food and serve her at her home. However the immediate neighbours, who are closeby can take her home and feed. On these occasions she is fully covered and escorted, served food in a corner of the house in a plate which the girl carries with her.

After the 5th day whenever the girl is taken out by others for lunch and dinner, she usually bathes in their house and dresses in fine clothes supplied by the family. Then she undergoes *arti* ceremony, receives gifts of money or new cloth from the family and fed on special sweet dishes before she returns home.

The Chalkatti family in Kshetra to which Gowri belonged has a widespread network of kinship ties in the viliage. So there were many invitations to feed the girl. On the third-day of her maturity itself, food was served to her in her home by the Kshatriya neighbour of the family (Although theoretically Kshatriya's and Lingayats do not accept food from one another and claim equal status). On the fourth day, relatives of the same caste-group took the girl for lunch to their home. The house was closeby and Gowri carried her own plate and tumbler for use. On the fifth day Gowri was taken by her Kshatriya friend Vijaya for lunch and served food on a leaf plate.

From the sixth to the sixteenth day the girl had lunch and dinner in different households, all Lingayats belonging to different sub-castes. She also received a number of gifts. A gold necklace and an expensive silk blouse cloth were presented to her by her father's mistress ; a widow belonging to different Lingayat sub-caste.

On the sixteenth day grand celebrations were held at her own

home. This is known as *ebbisuvudu* in Kannada. Literally the girl is made to 'get up' this day. From now onwards there are very few restrictions put on her movements inside the house. On this day the Chalkatti family gave a grand feast to all the friends, relatives and affines who had fed their daughter and given gifts. Quite a number of people came from other castes too. If the girl attains maturity after her marriage, although she lives in her natal home, expenses are either shared or met wholly by her husband's family, Gowri was only betrothed and all the expenses, therefore, were met by her father.

After the dinner, Gowri was seated on the chair in the pandal. Women sang puberty songs, waved *Kalasa* and some gave her gifts of new cloth or cash. The celebrations were carried on well into midnight. From the seventeenth day onwards Gowri started doing household work. It can be recalled here that her movements till the fifth day rituals were restricted to hall and bathroom in the house. After the fifth day she could enter the kitchen and family deity room. However, she will not cook or do other household work.

The wooden doll given to her on the first day remained with her till the completion of sixteenth day celebrations and usually *Kalasa arti* was waved to the doll also.

It is not so much the idea of impurity but that she should not exert herself with daily chores was emphasized by my Lingayat informants. She is given rich food and good rest. Even after the sixteenth day ceremony, for some more days possibly till the thirtieth day, Gowri's movements outside the house were restricted and she was usually accompanied by a girl or an elderly person when she had to go out of the home for necessities.

At the end of the month Gowri's mother took her to a well, and Gowri performed *Gangapuja*, worshipped the well water. Gowri offered dry dates, betel-nuts, and decorated the pulley and poles of the well with vermilion, sacred ash, sandal paste and waved lighted scented sticks. She ceremonially poured the milk and *ghi* carried in a vessel and lowered the vessel into the well. The water filled vessel was also worshipped. After prostrating before the well, Gowri carried the vessel home. The water was emptied to the trunk of a tree the following morning.

There were no more restrictions on her movements after this ceremony. Gowri in fact resumed fetching drinking water from river Tungabhadra at some distance from the village, as everybody does in the village.

The role of family washerwoman on this occasion has a ritual value. This however, is not comparable to the role of the Sinhalese washerman and washerwoman as *redimama* and *redinanda* (mother's-brother, or father-in-law, father's sister's husband, father's sister, mother-in-law, or mother's brother's wife). Among the Lingayats when a girl attains maturity, all the soiled clothes for the entire fortnight are washed by the family washerwoman. On the sixteenth day the washerwoman was fed on the 'puberty feast'. She sat through for an *arti* ceremony along with Gowri and received a gift of a new blouse cloth, some rice, betel, nut and two dry dates. This is the net reward in kind for her ritual services.

It is also customary among Lingayats that the saree and blouse the girls wears at the time of first menstrual flow are given away to family washerman. It is usually given to husband's family washerman, if the girl is married or betrothed. Since Gowri was already betrothed, her clothes were given to her would be husband's family washerwoman. The Two washerwomen were, however, related to one another. Should the marriage take place after puberty' and if the girl's family has not preserved the saree and blouse, substitute clothes have to be given to husband's family washerman.

The above description of a girl's puberty has many important and interesting sociological and ritual implications. I also intend giving a descriptive account of puberty rites for girls among the twice-born, i.e. Kshatriyas of Kshetra. A comparative study of these rituals, I hope, will highlight several similarities and differences. Till then I shall postpone analysing the implications of several rituals.

How and why girls are usually segregated and the first menstrual flow is dramatized as well as ritualised cannot be explained away psycho-analytically. Whether the girl is in danger from demons and evil powers, and segregation is a means of preventing the pollution from spreading will emerge from an analysis of

the rituals. Menstrual pollution is individual and confined to persons rather than families among Brahmanical castes. Among Lingayats the notions of ritual pollution at birth, death and menstruation are not comparable to those prevalent among the twice-born. Yes, but even among the Lingayats the first menstruation is an occasion for elaborate ceremony, why is this so? It might suggest broader structural principles than merely notions of pollution and fear. I will postpone a comparative analysis until after giving a descriptive account of puberty rites among the twice-born.

The Kshatriyas belong to one of the twice-born castes. Men undergo initiation ceremony and wear the sacred thread. They maintain vegetarianism and teetotalism as ideals. They accept priestly services and cooked food from the Brahmins. The notions of ritual purity and pollution among the Kshatriyas are modelled after Brahmanical Hinduism.

Life-crises like birth, girl's puberty, menstruation and death, involve observance of ritual pollution for a prescribed number of days along with certain rituals. Birth and death cause ritual pollution for 11 days to the immediate members of the household. During birth the mother and child are segregated, family-diety worship is suspended and men change their sacred thread on the 11th day. Birth pollution is rather mild compared to death pollution. During the 11th day death pollution, members of the family do not enter or cook in the kitchen. Family-diety worship is suspended and men renew their sacred thread on the 11th day. Besides, there are food and dress restrictions.

Unlike birth and death pollution which covers the entire family and agnatic kinsmen in a patrilineal society, menstruation and a girl's attaining age are considered as incurring individual pollution. The personal pollution also involves the segregation of the persons for three days. Her touch is considered defiling. She does not bathe, nor adorn her hair with flowers and forehead with vermillion. Early on the fourth day morning the woman takes a purificatory bath. The bedding, plate and tumbler used by her are also purified. She enters the kitchen but does not cook till the fifth day.

With this general background, I will give below a descriptive

account of puberty rites for Kshatriya girls as partly narrated by informants and partly observed by me. On Sunday 8th May 1960, Vijaya aged about 14, attained maturity. The position of the stars, month, day, hour and minute are all taken into consideration to determine whether the girl has attained maturity on an auspicious or inauspicious moment. Saturday, Sunday and Tuesday are considered inauspicious. Even the colour of the saree worn, especially black, is considered inauspicious. The girl, as she reaches the age of maturity, is advised by elders to wear old but not black sarees.

The astrological calculations in Vijaya's case revealed that the time was auspicious. Although it was a Sunday, because it was *Dwadasi*, it was considered quite auspicious. The light-green saree she was wearing then was declared a good omen. If inauspicious indications are revealed by the astrologer, then even evil effects can be removed by giving gifts to Brahmins or propitiating deities and spirits.

Among the Kshatriyas of Kshetra it is in vogue that whoever normally a woman first spots that the girl has attained maturity, should give milk and *ghi* to her to lick. In Vijaya's case it was her mother who first noticed it and gave her milk and *ghi*. After this Vijaya was given parched rice mixed with curd (*mosaravalakki*) to eat.

Soon after this a wooden plank was put in one of the outer rooms. The girl was asked to sit facing the East. Meanwhile some coconut oil was given to her which she applied to her body and head. After this Vijaya put some vermilion on her forehead and smeared her body with turmeric powder. A betel-leaf, a whole arecanut (*bettadike*), along with a small wooden doll (*Chandana gombe*) were given to Vijaya. Then *arti* was waved to her. The arecanut and whole turmeric are preserved till fifth day. While the wooden doll keeps company till the 16th day. Among the Kshatriyas of Kshetra usually two married women or two unmarried girls wave *arti*. Neither men nor widows can wave *arti* to a girl attaining age.

Arti consists of two metal lamps containing lighted cotton wick soaked in oil, arranged in a brass plate. While *kalasa* consists of an additional vessel (*kalasagindi*) containing water in

which betel leaves and areca flowers are arranged. *Kalasa* and not *arti* which is used by Lingayats on almost all ceremonial occasions. Although the term *arti* in a general sense may indicate waving of *Kalasa* or sacred lamp on varied ceremonial occasions.

After the *arti*, Vijaya was lead for a ceremonial bath at a distance from the house. The spot was enclosed by a temporary screen and the girl reached the spot walking on wooden planks. Here again she was made to sit facing East. The tied saree was loosened covering the waist. Married women gave hot water to Vijaya's mother and threw some on the girl from a distance. They did not however, touch the girl or her mother. After the bath Vijaya was given turmeric powder to apply on her cheeks and vermilion to put on her forehead (symbols of married status among the twice-born). Wearing a clean old saree, and holding a betel and nut the girl reached the outer room of the house by walking on wooden planks. Throughout this initial ceremony pipe music was provided by village pipers.

While Vijaya was sitting on a plank in the room, five married women (*muthaides*) proceeded to prepare *Daduma*, in the hall. Here is a brief description of *daduma*. It is an old clean *dhoti* (men's wear) supplied for the occasion by the family washerman. The five *muthaides*—one of them in fact—will dip their right hand palm into *Okali* : turmeric powder mixed with lime dissolved in water. The palm imprints are made at four corners as well as at the centre of the cloth. This is known as *chettu badiyuvudu*. Meanwhile the mortar and pestle were smeared with lime and red-earth lines and worshipped ; before pounding raw sesamum and jaggery. The pounded sesamum—*chiguli*—was made into balls. These balls along with betel and nut were put in the four corners as well as the middle of the cloth. This is described as *uditumbuvudu*. The five *muthaides* lifted the cloth then and placed it on a plank inside the pandal erected in the hall for the occasion.

A ceremonial lamp was lit. Each *muthaide* saluted the lamp and *daduma* and ceremonially sat on the latter for a while, when Vijaya's family gave her betel, nut, sweetened sesamum balls and the gift of a new blouse cloth and was invariably made to pronounce their husband's name before getting up. After the

five *muthaides* had their turn Vijaya was led to the pandal.

At the entrance of the pandal a seer measure decorated with lime and red-earth lines, containing a little turmeric powder, vermillion and rice was kept. Vijaya worshipped the seer and then dashed against it. This is known as *padiyadavuvudu*. Then she entered the pandal and stood facing East. She was given 5 turmeric balls (made from turmeric powder mixed with water) and asked to throw them over her head. Another 5 turmeric balls were thrown over the wooden doll without looking at it. After this turmeric solution (*okali*) was put into her hand. She imprinted her palm on four corners which formed a square and middle of the wall at her back without looking at it i.e. she did it backwards. She was similarly asked to put five impressions of her forefinger dipped in turmeric solution on the doll without looking at it, and doing it backwards.

The *daduma* was pushed aside by Vijaya as she sat on the plank facing east, keeping the wooden doll on her right side. While doing all this she should not look at the wall at her back. Now one *muthaide* came forward and put *chiguli*, betel, nut, soaked chickpea dhal (*kadalebele*), jaggery cube, some rice, a coconut and five varieties of fruits, of this lemon is a necessity, into Vijaya's saree, which was bundled at front—*uditumbu*. These things are preserved till the fourth day and then given to the family washerwoman. *Muthaides* put *akshate*—rice dyed yellow with turmeric powder—on Vijaya and waved *arti* to her. Sweetened sesamum balls were later distributed to grown-up girls by Vijaya. There is no pollution involved because no water is mixed and sesamum is raw, while fried sesamum is polluting. The intension of giving it to grownup girls is that they too will soon come of age.

This was followed by *naierisuva ceremony*. It was as follows : Five *muthaides* standing in a final relationship to Vijaya's family came forward and held the seer measure dashed against earlier by the girl, in their hands. A thin iron rod—which is generally used for removing pancake from the frying pan was put into the seer.

Five folded betel leaves were inserted into the rod by the *muthaides*. While inserting it, they repeated "*atreya gotrada*

magalu, kapila gotrada sose, nai eru, nai eru'' (The daughter of Atreya gotra, daughter-in-law of kapila gotra). This is described as—*naierisuvudu*, where the girl's gotra was matched to another gotra into which she could get married. If the girl is already married her husband's actual gotra is pronounced. If she is betrothed, her would-be-husband's gotra is likewise matched. The iron rod with betel leaves is put into the seer kept aside and preserved till the fourth day.

Among the Kshatriyas of Kshetra no formal information of the girls' coming of age is sent to affines. *Okali* is simply poured on real, classificatory mother's-brothers and on the person if the girl is already betrothed. This in short indicates the fact of a girl's coming of age. There is great fun as men are chased and they always try to escape from being poured with *okali*. Onlookers enjoy the play and men cannot take objection to *okali* being put on them. Married women (sisters) young boys and girls generally take the lead in putting *okali*.

All the men on whom *okali* is put are then invited by the girl's family. There they are made to sit on a plank when more *okali* is poured ceremonially on their right shoulder. Coconut oil is smeared all over the body and applied to head. They are then given hot water bath and fed on vermicelli and other delicious dishes. These young men are sent home accompanied by pipe music.

Okali was poured on Taranath, Vijaya's mother's brother and Venkatesh, a classificatory mother's-brother both residents of Kshetra. Venkatesh was already betrothed to a girl in another village. Although Vijaya was not betrothed, and initially Taranath expressed his unwillingness, yet there were good reasons to believe that the girl would get married to Taranath as it eventually happened. The entire horse-play is done at a convenient time on the first day of a girl's coming of age. If men are away or if the information has to be sent to another place, it can be deferred.

The ceremonial pandal should be erected on the first day itself. Vijayaa's coming of age was noticed late evening on Sunday. Essential rituals were conducted the same day, although the pandal was erected on the following morning. The pandal

supported on bamboo poles had entrance from East, South and North, while the wall blocked the West. It was decorated with lace curtain at the top and sides and various pictures of Hindu Gods and Goddesses were hung on the bamboo poles. The pandal is also known as mantap in the vernacular and Vijaya stayed and slept inside the mantap till she underwent purification on the fourth day.

She was provided with minimum bedding, a mat to sleep and a blanket to cover. These items are purified when she emerges ritually pure or given to the family washerwoman. A cheap metal—alluminium—plate or leaf-plate and a tumbler, were provided to the girl for use. Metal plate and tumbler are purified and sometimes they are earmarked for use by menstruating women, hence kept separately. Vijaya was always accompanied by her sisters or mother or an old relative when she went out of the house to attend to necessities. She was never sent alone for “fear of being attacked by evil spirits”. A girl in puberty is said to have ‘*hasimai*’ literally ‘wet body’ easily susceptible to attack by devils and spirits.

Vijaya’s father further told me, “A girl attaining age is treated with care and fear, like a goddess for 5 days. In former times the Kshatriyas used to celebrate the occasion on a grand scale; the girl being kept in a specially erected hut at some distance from the house, with lots of attendants around. But now, days have changed, and present days are very delicate, *najuku kala*. Something might happen by changing the place and diet. She might easily fall sick”.

However, he took care to compare the pandal to the hut and said, that rich decorations to the pandal depend upon the financial conditions of the family. When asked whether the pictures of the deities get polluted on contact, he said, Vijaya will be careful not to touch them voluntarily. But she herself is in an elevated status of a goddess—bountiful and dangerous—at once. It is quite all right to decorate the pandal with the pictures of Hindu deities.

He told me further, that girls in puberty are kept in special places and looked after with much care. She stands on the threshold of passing childhood and attaining maidenhood. From

now on she becomes a grownup woman ready for the task of procreation. In this sense, her first menstruation, *hanneradu varshada hole* (twelfth year pollution, a general saying irrespective of girl's actual age at maturity) is an occasion to enjoy and celebrate. It is from this time onwards, she gives up girlish ways and learns to behave like a woman trying to know the ways of the world.

But for the ceremonial bath on the first day, the subsequent two days, Vijaya simply changed into clean clothes. Soon after this, five married women came and waved *arti* to Vijaya, then she was given her breakfast which largely consisted of grated coconut, crushed dry dates mixed with jaggery, *spices* and *ghi*. Girls are generally fed on special and nourishing foodstuff, for several days after the first menstruation. The rich food is believed to give her strength and help overcome fatigue.

Among the Kshatriyas any married woman provided she is not a nursing mother or menstruating, may come in contact, touch the girl in puberty to smear turmeric, comb her hair and dress her up. It is considered a pleasant duty, although later on the woman herself will take purificatory bath to assume normal work in the house. On the second and third evenings Vijaya underwent the *arti* ceremony.

The fourth day is the day of purification when the girl emerges from her seclusion. Purification is partial and seclusion is lifted only partially. Purificatory bath and other rites are held on the day. It is also described as *mara muttisuva dina*, when Vijaya was made to touch a neem tree near her house ceremonially after the bath.

Early in the morning at about 4.30 a.m. on the fourth day of her menstruation Vijaya underwent the *arti* ceremony. Then her mother smeared the girl with *arisina enne* (turmeric powder mixed with coconut oil) Vijaya walking on wooden planks was lead outside the house for a bath. The purificatory bath and accompanying ceremonies for Vijaya and the wooden doll-her companion it was said, should be completed while it is still dusk, i.e. before sunrise. Pipe music is provided throughout the morning ceremony. One of the *muthaides* carries a new saree, blouse and other ceremonial objects required for tree worship.

Vijaya bathed with her clothes on, also washed her hair. Then she tied her wet saree round her waist, holding a betel and nut in her hand, walking on wooden planks, she came to the neem tree. A neem or pomagranate tree can be worshipped by the girl on this occasion. A little space on the Eastern side of the tree was cleared and smeared with cowdung solution. A wooden plank was kept on the spot. A doll-like image-*gurjavva*, apparently female form made from cowdung, was placed on the plank. A few blades of grass were stuck into the dung image. Vijaya poured milk and *ghi* to the trunk of the tree, then she decorated the tree and the dung image with vermillion, turmeric powder and cotton wick designed as a kerchief (*gejje vastra*). Other ceremonial objects like rice, copra halves, plantains, *chiguli* and *tambittu* were put in heap near the tree. This is known as *marau di tumbuvudu*. A coconut was broken and lighted scented sticks were waved. After this Vijaya ceremonially touched the tree. The ceremonial objects, offered to the tree on this occasion are left there.

The married women participating in the ceremony were given vermillion, betel and nut. Vijaya with her doll walked home on the planks and changed into new clothes. However, if there is enough time, the girl could dress herself near the tree. After combing her hair, Vijaya was given breakfast.

During the day the family washerwoman white-washed the house and smeared the earth with cowdung solution. She cleaned all the soiled clothes used by the girl but retained for herself the saree and blouse in which Vijaya had first menstruated. In addition the washerwoman received the oil cup and comb used by Vijaya as well as ritual objects of *udiyakki* given to Vijaya on the first day. Cow's urine was then sprinkled all over the place to purify the house. On this day the girl was made to remove the old glass bangles—*hole bale*—and wear new glass bangles. She had 7 green bangles on her right hand and 6 on her left. The bangle seller is usually given both cash and grain on this occasion.

On the fourth evening married women came to do *arti* to Vijaya. The five married women who had conducted *nai erisuva ceremony* on the first day came forward to do *nai elisuva ceremony*.

It is as follows: holding thin iron rod (*mogachuvakai*) they removed one after another the betel leaves inserted on the first day. If the leaves are not intact, they might insert one or five fresh leaves and remove them from the rod. While removing they repeated *salavali* (lineage) *gotra*, and said *naieli* five times. Gathered women sang puberty songs and the family distributed betel-nut and offered vermillion.

The local Kshatriya families most of whom were affines to Vijaya's family sent *Osage* (news) *gifts* to the family. Supplies like rice, dhal, wheat flour and so forth were sent by the affines to the girl's family from the third day onwards. The supplies were cooked to feed Vijaya. Besides, friends and relatives living closeby can invite and feed her, also give her presents of money and new cloth on these occasions.

In addition to Kshatriya households, four Lingayat households invited and fed Vijaya on special sweet dishes.

After the fourth day ceremony, till the 16th day *arti* ceremony was done to Vijaya on Wednesdays and Saturdays. On these occasions the girl was dressed in rich silk clothes and was loaded with jewellery like gold bangles, earring, nosering, silver chain on her feet and so forth. Even the *arti* ceremony during these days could be held if voluntary at the place of friends or relatives, preferably of the same caste. Vijaya could have joined her Lingayat friend Gowri at the latter's home for *arti* on one of the days. But the evening heavy rains prevented it.

On *arti* days, Vijaya took ritual bath in the morning and was given betel and nut to hold. But she no longer walked on planks. She underwent *arti* both in the morning and evening. Two young girls dressed in fine clothes sitting by Vijaya's side also underwent *arti* ceremony. It assumed an air of festivity and women sang puberty songs while the family distributed betel-nut and vermillion.

The sixteenth day ceremony is described as the day of *minduta*. Special sweet dishes were prepared and relatives and friends from one's own and other castes were invited for dinner. This was the return party which the girl's family gave for people who sent *osage gifts*. After the dinner Vijaya underwent *arti* when she received some presents from the gathered women.

If a girl is betrothed, on the sixteenth day, the would-be-husband's people bring *chiguli*, *tambittu*, five variety of fruits, coconut, turmeric, vermillion, cloth for blouses and perform *udi tumbuva shastra*. If the girl is already married the entire puberty ceremony expenses would be borne by her husband's family, although she is in her natal home.

The girl who has come of age should not touch the broom nor grind grain till the end of the month. She usually eats specially nourishing food and given good rest. Normally ordinary food, cooked for others in the family, is not given to her. Good food and rest are believed to help a vigorous growth of her body. When the girl menstruates after the puberty ceremony, she undergoes *arti* ceremony on the first day. This ends all the ritual observances. Puberty and menstruation pollution among the Kshatriyas is personal and it does not affect the other members of the family but women usually observe seclusion.

The descriptive account of girl's puberty ceremonies given so far is helpful to understand the extent to which female sex is ritualised and becomes a ceremonial occasion in contrast to male sex. This is true of the Kshatriyas as well as the Lingayats. Although rites of passage are common, the way these are held and other details connected with it differ as between the Lingayats and Kshatriyas. The common points as well as differences are indicated below mostly to show how the notion of ritual pollution is of only marginal importance among the Lingayats.

The puberty ceremony as a whole is considered as a happy occasion to be celebrated and enjoyed. It is considered the first milestone in a girl's life. This brings about a change in her status. Her movements outside the home are generally restricted if she is not married off soon. She can no longer go about care-free. The change from girlhood to maidenhood is loaded with a number of implications like responsibility, modesty and so forth.

Female modesty is overemphasized and the name and fame of the family is associated with womenfolk. A grownup girl is made aware of this responsibility by publicly celebrating the occasion when she comes of age. Any lapses in her behaviour

and morals will put her as well as the family in predicament and the result would be social degradation.

To say that puberty ceremonies are held to publicise that the girl has reached marriageable age and ready for procreation, is to limit the scope of the discussions. In fact in rural India many girls are either married or betrothed long before they come of age. In this case puberty ceremonies become superfluous. Ritualising the sex and celebrating the occasion has both social and personal implications.

An analysis of the puberty songs generally sung on the occasion suggests the yearning for married status and motherhood. The girl is made conscious of these potential roles. Also in a patrilineal society, the girl upon marriage leaves her parental home to become part of her husband's home. Her movement between the two families strengthen the bonds of friendship yet she could no longer belong to her parents family. The prospect of losing the daughter is overcome by the ideas of new links she is able to establish and above all she should find fulfilment as a woman. It is fundamental that she should be true to herself, that is, being wife and mother. Parents, brothers, and a host of other kinsmen of the girl are referred to in the puberty songs as inviting the inevitable occasion and getting ready to discharge their responsibilities with a sense of joy.

Puberty ceremonies are also social occasions. People are invited for the celebrations and are treated to a special feast got up by the family to mark the occasion. In addition to kinsmen and caste-fellows, many others are invited and they do participate. In turn the people reciprocate by feeding the girl on special dishes and by giving her small presents. The gift giving and feasting of course help to reinforce the social bonds between intra-caste and inter-caste members. The ritual services of the washerman are essential and are acknowledged in public.

The above few points are common between Lingayats and Kshatriyas, there are also contrasting points about the ceremonies and views. The notions of ritual pollution are less pronounced among the Lingayats than the Kshatriyas is clear. The Lingayat girl is first of all required to ceremonially touch a tree before undergoing other rituals. While the implications of this act are

clear, why a Kshatriya girl is given milk and ghi to lick and eating parched rice, mixed with curd earlier before she is given a ritual bath cannot be understood easily. Further the Kshatriya girl is made to walk on wooden planks which implies avoiding possible contamination by coming in contact with mother earth. While a Lingayat girl do not observe all these.

Although the girls attaining age are segregated among both the Kshatriyas and Lingayats the rigour of segregation are absent among the latter. Among Lingayats the girls are given daily bath in the bathroom inside the house, while this is not so among the Kshatriyas. The ritual complex of *nai erisuva* and *elisuva* ceremony dramatises the enactment and easily lends itself for psychoanalysis apart from its sociological implications. This is absent among the Lingayats.

The role of the family Jangam and the ritual acts connected with his role are important in a Lingayat household. There is no corresponding role for a Brahmin priest, presumably because the pollution is individualistic in nature. But the house is purified.

The pouring of coloured water (*okali*), the use of flowers, fruits, betel and arecanut and sacred lamp, all convey the auspicious occasion. Especially the throwing of coloured water on real and classificatory mother's-brothers and others imply those who could constitute potential spouses for a girl and reflect the possible marriage pattern. This practice is maximised among the Kshatriyas and not so institutionalized among Lingayats (unless the girl is already betrothed or married, when *okali* is poured on him). Pouring coloured water in this context denotes a happy occasion.

The girl attaining age needs good food and rest are commonly held among the Kshatriyas and Lingayats. Inferior status and ritual pollution are nearly lifelong attributes of a Brahmin woman, while this is not so with the Lingayats. A good deal of similarity as well as some major differences between the Kshatriya and Lingayat ways and views of life is discernible here.

CHAPTER IV

VEERASAIWA LIBERALISM—A CASE STUDY

The material for this paper was collected during September 1960 ; towards the end of my field research at Kshetra, a village in Bellary district of Mysore State. There are 1929 people living in 358 households representing 18 caste-groups with a number of subcastes. The Lingayat caste-group (non-Brahmanical Saivites) constitute 48% of the total village population. The Lingayat Panchachara subcaste is preponderant and constitute 38% of the total and 78.7% of the Lingayat population (734 out of 932). The Lingayats own nearly 65% of the total cultivable land in the village of which 1405 acres i.e. 57.8% belongs to the Panchachara.

Facts of the Case : Narrative and Versions :

The following is the general information about the case which had become a talk of the village and about which people were giving different and colourful interpretations soon after the event. It took sometime before it became possible for me to obtain different versions from different parties either directly involved or in some way interested in the case.

On Monday, 12th September 1960, Ayya, the father of Nagu, came to Kshetra from Kanchur, a village about 15 miles from Kshetra, to take his daughter home. On the following morning, Ayya, Nagu and her younger brother Halesh, went to Kanchur. The same evening Nagu went to Guruvathi, a village one-and-a-half miles south-east of Kshetra to offer worship to the deity there. The adultery case took place there ; Soma, a Brahmin bus conductor being the other party to adultery.

The information that Nagu had come with Soma to Guruvathi was given to the collaterals of Nagu's husband in Kshetra by Basava, an ex-bus-cleaner and a Potter youth belonging to Guruvathi. To begin with Basava was said to be instrumental in bringing Nagu and Soma together. But when dismissed from

bus service, he somehow suspected that Soma was responsible for it and he determined to teach Soma a lesson. It seemed, earlier, he had disclosed the Nagu-Soma relationship to the collaterals of Nagu's husband, but they had asked him to inform them at an 'appropriate time'. And the appropriate time came on 13th September 1960, the day on which Nagu came to Guruvathi. Basava immediately ran to Kshetra at 9 p.m. and gave information to Nagu's husband's relatives that she had come to Guruvathi with Soma.

On getting the information, a party of three persons—Chandra Gowda and his two friends, Basappa Kadale and Hemanna Budihal, all Lingayats—rushed to Guruvathi around 10.30 p.m. They found that Nagu and Soma were inside the room. They wanted to give a good beating to Soma, but the timely intervention of neighbours prevented this from happening. However, the party locked the room forcing the lovers to remain inside. Meanwhile, Channappa Gowda, the bill collector of Guruvathi and a relative of the village Headman got the news and he rushed to the scene. In the absence of the village Headman who had gone away to Hubli on some work, it was the responsibility of Channappa Gowda to maintain peace and order in the village since he was also officiating as a Headman. He requested the Kshetra party to have the room opened, succeeded in getting Nagu released and took her with him to his house.

Early morning, the following day Chandra Gowda left his two companions behind to keep a watch over Soma and returned to Kshetra to take the local panchayatdars—D. Angadi, B. Pujari and some Lingayat elders—to Guruvathi. But by the time they arrived at Guruvathi, Channappa Gowda had managed to get Soma released by standing a security to bring him before any panchayatdars provided he was allowed to go off for his duties on the morning bus. If the bus were delayed, he pleaded, it would cause much inconvenience to the passengers. Accordingly, Soma was released by Chandra Gowda's companions. He, Nagu and Channappa Gowda left Guruvathi by the morning bus at 6.30. The Kshetra panchayatdars who reached Guruvathi after 7.00 a.m. had to return home without meeting any person involved in the case.

It was evident that Nagu coming of a doubtful parentage was a smart girl. She was married to property rather than to man, the idiotic E. P. Gowda. It was felt that he could never attract or manage her and the marriage would never be successful. Now, therefore, the collaterals of E. P. Gowda and the Panchayatdars were seized with the idea as to how to keep E. P. Gowda's property intact. If the case were to be settled before the panchayat, it was considered desirable that Nagu should be made to give in writing that she did not love or want E. P. Gowda as her husband. If this was effected, the party thought that Nagu or her children born out of wedlock would be disabled from claiming any share in the property. They also thought of another alternative; bringing the eldest son of B. P. Gowda, E. P. Gowda's brother, from Haladalli and transferring E. P. Gowda's share of property to his name. The main idea that gripped their minds was how to keep the property intact, no matter what happened to the future of Nagu and other human relationships.

By the third week of September 1960, it became possible for me to meet the panchayatdars, Channappa Gowda of Guruvathi and V. P. Gowda of Kshetra, elder brother of Chandra Gowda and a classificatory nephew of E. P. Gowda. V. P. Gowda as the guardian of E. P. Gowda's family had visited his aunt at Kanchur and brought her to Kshetra for a day's stay after the incident. Against the background of these events and the fact that the panchayatdars had not yet taken up the case for consideration, I proceeded to obtain the different views and versions of the case.

Panchayatdars' Views and Version :

By the middle of September 1960, I was able to meet the panchayatdars—D. Angadi, B. Pujari and S. Kadale—at Angadi's house. In the course of our talk, I drew their attention to the reported case of adultery. Then Angadi told me that they (the panchayatdars) had been to Guruvathi to deliberate over the said case on 14th September 1960 but had to return without doing anything as the persons involved in the case had already left the place. He said the case could be taken up only after the

return of the persons involved and particularly Nagu's return to Kshetra. He gave a general idea of the role and responsibility of the Panchayatdars as arbitrators and peace makers.

In Angadi's opinion, the decision of the adultery case would much depend upon Nagu's views and reactions to the incident. He felt that the case presented further difficulties as the husband was idiotic. Hence he felt that though the panchayatdars were not willing to separate the husband and wife, under the circumstances, they would not disallow Nagu to remarry instead of forcing her, for want of alternative, to continue the "scandalous affair".

While the talk was in progress, E. P. Gowda, the idiotic husband was passing that way. We wanted to take the opportunity of knowing his mind. Angadi called him and asked him how he was doing and who was feeding him. He told us that he looked after his brother's children and his sister-in-law fed him as was the case before the coming of his wife. When Angadi asked him whether he wanted his wife to return, he started weeping and said that he did not want her back as he was happy without her and was well looked after by his sister-in-law.

The discussion began when E. P. Gowda left the place. Kadale gave his version of the case. He said that Nagu was a bold girl. It seems she told Channappa Gowda of Guruvathi that she had come to Guruvathi to offer worship in the Basavanna temple. Since it became dark and she did not know anybody other than Soma at Guruvathi, she went along with her brother to Soma's room and did not think anything unnatural in accepting to spend the night in the room. Kadale felt that although the story was not as simple as that, Nagu's bold narrative was admirable.

B. Pujari came forth with another piece of information. He said that Bharamappa Angadi, a local Lingayat seemed to be siding with Nagu in getting her husband's property divided. Bharamappa Angadi was adept and much experienced in doing such things. And he already had had a case to his credit. Angadi volunteered to relate the facts of the previous case in brief. It seems Malli, a Kuruba woman who had developed affairs with Bharamappa Angadi used to run away repeatedly from her husband Kallappa. When the husband divorced Malli publicly

and took a second wife, the former went out and settled in a nearby township and there bore two or three children to her lovers. In the meantime, Kallappa and his second wife died leaving behind a little daughter. Bharamappa Angadi who had by then manaeuvoured to get Kallappa's land transferred in his name as his tenant, thought of bringing Malhi to Kshetra "to take care of the little daughter". Bharamappa's calculations were upset. The Kshetra Panchayatdars who met to find a foster-parent for the little girl fortunately declared Bharamappa to be only a trustee of the property until the girl grew up. Further, he was also asked to give a share of the produce from Kallappa's fields for the maintenance of the girl. It was decided that Kenchavva, a distant relative of the girl would look after her perhaps marry her off to her only son. The point Angadi wanted to make was that the same motives as drove Bharamappa seize by fraud and trickery the usufructuary rights in Kallappa's property might be at work in the present case also.

Angadi further commented on Nagu's bad parentage and the history of the family. Her mother lived with her lover after separating from her husband. Nagu was married when she was just 10 or 11 years old. Her consent was not taken. She did not even see the bridegroom until she was married. Angadi felt that the marriage was arranged purely from property considerations. E. P. Gowda and B. P. Gowda, the idiotic brothers had nearly a hundred acres of landed property. Their widowed mother strove hard to bring up her sons and get them married. When she died in March 1960, the brothers were left with just about 20 acres of land. In May 1960 the property was formally divided between the two brothers and the panchayatdars appointed V. P. Gowda and P. P. Gowda, two collaterals to be in overall charge of E.P. and B. P. Gowda respectively. Only after the formal division of the property Nagu joined her husband and set up a separate kitchen in the same house. Thus Nagu had already completed 3 to 4 years of the so-called married life before the incident took place.

Angadi and his friends now wanted to know my views on the case and suggestions as to how best it could be settled. I was rather embarrassed and, for obvious reasons, was not prepared

to get involved. However, I told them, "Why not give Nagu another chance to correct herself? What would they have done if it were a case of one of their own daughters? The young and inexperienced girl deserves to be excused". The panchayatdars said appreciatively, "Why one chance, she could be given 3 to 4 chances to correct herself. But the situation is hopeless as the husband happens to be the most unfit company". After all, she has a right to enjoy married life, but if she is compelled to live with her husband, they felt, that life long 'affairs' are the only outlet for her.

The talk drifted to education of girls, educated employed wives, the quality of illegitimate children and widow remarriage. Angadi gave almost a sermon against girls' education and people marrying educated women. He felt that educated employed women "enslave their husbands and even make them spread their beds". He quoted a case from Kolalu in support of this. As to illegitimate children, it was said that they generally turned out to be smarter than the legitimate children. He summed up that nature seemed to favour children of doubtful parentage as against the legitimate. A case was cited in support of this view. This view also appeared to possess particular relevance to smart Nagu who came of doubtful parentage in contrast to idiotic E. P. Gowda who came of a good family. As to widow remarriage, Angadi felt that such marriages had a kind of stigma attached to them. They were not much encouraged or well received by people. Hence the practice of a good many widows and divorcees taking lovers. People do not approve such affairs but they would tolerate or connive at them so long as the affairs did not lead to the birth of children. One or two cases in Kshetra which were recognised as such and were treated with a certain amount of reservation were cited to illustrate the public attitude to the problem.

Channappa Gowda's Version of the Case :

On the morning of 20th September 1960, Channappa Gowda of Guruvathi called on me at the Rest House in Kshetra. He wanted a petition to be typed and sent to the Archaeological

Department. Accepting to do the typing for him, I decided to use the opportunity to get firsthand information from him as he had played a very important role in saving Nagu and Soma from the wrath of and imminent manhandling by the Kshetra party. He was rather surprised to find that I got the news about the case and that I was interested in its details. He was rather reluctant to speak about the case. I persuaded and convinced him that I had already known quite a good deal about the case. But because the information and versions given to me were confusing and rather inconsistent, I wanted to know the facts firsthand if he could part with information. Further, I convinced him that mine was the interest of an Ethnographer wanting to know something about the local methods of settling disputes.

Channappa Gowda agreed to oblige me with information. But even as he began his narrative, he prefaced "For all your education and foreign travel, you are no match for the simple village girl Nagu involved in the case. Though the girl is young—about 15 or 16, she is very smart and bold and speaks so well and convincingly that a person putting her questions would be required to keep his mouth shut and be ashamed of questioning her".

About the adultery case, he said that as the rowdy Kshetra party had locked up Nagu and Soma in the room, there was a lot of noise and commotion. When he heard the noise at about 11.30 in the night, he was afraid that the party might go wild, beat the persons involved in the incident and disturb the peace of the village. He was particularly concerned because in the absence of the Headman who had gone to Hubli on some work, he functioned as Headman and hence he was responsible for keeping peace and order in the village. Further, if the case was taken to the court the Guruvathi people would be unnecessarily involved and the village reputation would go down because of the 'outsiders' since neither of the two disputing parties belonged to Guruvathi.

Channappa Gowda, irrespective of the rights or wrongs of the situation or the case, decided to do something before it went out of control or led to further complications. He rushed to the

place of incident where a number of people had already gathered to see what would happen to people locked up inside the room and whether they would escape at all. Channappa Gowda requested the Kshetra party to have the door opened so that he could see what had happened inside. As the door was flung open, Nagu came out with her younger brother and faced the crowd outside quietly and boldly. There was no trace of her being upset or unnerved by the happenings outside the room.

The indignant Kshetra party however, advanced towards her and demanded that she hand over the *tali* (marriage pendant) to them and sever her relations with her husband. Overwhelmed by anger, they shouted nonsense. Channappa Gowda intervened and pacified them. He advised the Kshetra party to bring the elderly panchayatdars from Kshetra in the morning to decide about the incident.

Channappa Gowda as an elderly person asked Nagu to follow him and spend the rest of the night at his place. On reaching home he put a few questions to Nagu as to why it all happened? Nagu told him that she had come to the village to offer worship in the Basavanna temple. After the worship it became dark and as she did not know anybody from the village except Soma who was their family friend, she went to Soma's room and accepted to spend the night there along with her brother. She did not sleep or even plan to sleep with Soma. For how could she? Only in the morning she had taken bath after completing the third day of her menstruation and had come to worship in the temple. Channappa Gowda was rather startled to hear it all and did not feel like questioning her any further in the matter. The following morning, matters took a different turn.

I asked Channappa Gowda why he undertook to have Soma set free by standing a security to produce him on demand before the Panchayatdars. He denied that he had done anything of the kind. He said that the panchayatdars themselves showed very little interest in opening and discussing the case. He disclosed how V. P. Gowda, the elder brother of Chandra Gowda, brought Nagu from Kanchur to Kshetra and sent her back to Kanchur again on 18th September 1960. Further he told me that V. P.

Gowda had given the police sub-inspector at Kanchur in writing an undertaking to protect and safeguard Nagu, failing which he could be punished. If the Kshetra people or panchayatdars had some integrity, or were angry at Nagu's misconduct, or were keen on investigating it, where was the need to bring Nagu to Kshetra or give an undertaking to the police? In other words, if the Kshetra people were keen on hushing up the case, what could he do or why should he take initiative in raking it up?

V. P. Gowda's Elaboration of the case :

The next opportunity of getting some more firsthand information albeit different version, came on 25th September 1960. After our dinner at the local schoolmaster's house, we were just chatting in the verandah, V. P. Gowda, whose house happened to be closeby, came along and joined us. I persuaded him to tell us what had happened in the adultery case. He narrated the case elaborately as follows.

He said that when the "silly undesirable thing" happened at Guruvathi on 13th September 1960, he had gone to Ranebennur to sell his newly harvested groundnuts. He could not come back to Kshetra for nearly a week as the roads had become quite muddy because of heavy rains and his bullock cart which he had used for transporting groundnuts could not be brought back. When he returned to Kshetra on 14th September 1960, he was shocked to know of what had happened. He lamented the lack of commonsense and thoughtlessness of his younger brother. He scolded Chandra Gowda for allowing a mountain to be made out of a molehill of the "thing". He however, suspected that his brother who was simple and did not have anything against Nagu must have been instigated, otherwise he would not have acted in that manner.

According to V. P. Gowda, the incident which happened at Guruvathi on 13th September 1960 was just this : The room which was rented by Soma for overnight stays belonged to a low caste old woman who had many adventures to her credit in her youth. Now that she is old, she spends most of her time round

about here and go home late at night only to sleep. She was known to Nagu's family. Hence Nagu went to her around 9 p.m. She naturally invited Nagu inside and they were just eating their dinner and chatting, when the rowdy Kshetra party rushed over there and did this "humbug".

He had nothing to say about Nagu's character or the alleged incident of adultery. He would not pay heed to all that. On the other hand, he was happy that Channappa Gowda had intervened in time and sent the people involved safely to their respective places.

He said he was rather perturbed by the happening and so the very next day i. e. on 15th September he went to Kanchur and apologized to his affines for the hasty action of his brother and his companions. He stayed with the affines for a couple of days as a gesture of goodwill, cleared up the misunderstanding and straightened up the matter between them. He asked their permission for taking Nagu to Kshetra which they happily gave. The following morning, as he and Nagu were getting ready to leave Kanchur for Kshetra, the police Sub-Inspector who had come on some other work to Kanchur sent word to Nagu's parents asking them to see him immediately. The parents met the Inspector and answered his queries with regard to their daughter's case. They further told him that all was well and Nagu would soon be going to Kshetra with her husband's relative who had come to take her. When he learned that V. P. Gowda had come, he sent for him and interrogated him about the case. Gowda dispelled the suspicion from the Inspector's mind and gave him oral assurances that as guardian of the family he would take the responsibility of protecting Nagu.

Who gave the information to the police? According to Channappa Gowda, it was Nagu's parents who feared that the incident might lead to dangerous consequences and who were worried about their daughter's future and safety. But V. P. Gowda suspected it the other way round and said Channappa Gowda himself gave the information to the police. Gowda, however, summed up the matter leaving his affines and the Guruvathi people as unconnected with it. He said that the police

had come to Kanchur by themselves on some other work, they made casual enquiries and incidentally obtained some information about the case. He said it was all baseless to say that he had given anything in writing to the police about Nagu's safety and future.

V. P. Gowda related some more facts and events about the marriage of E. P. Gowda and Nagu and his responsibility of taking care of them, and so forth. He said he agreed to have E. P. Gowda and Nagu as his wards when the panchayatdars entrusted them to him as such after a division of property and setting up of two separate households in the summer of 1960. This became imperative as the two idiotic brothers—their wives, to be more exact—could not get along and also the wives' parents were keen on a division of property. He said Nagu was intended to take care of her idiotic husband and that he would welcome her back into the family even if she happened to be a bad character or guilty of adultery.

When I asked V. P. Gowda why not he himself take the property and take care of his uncle, he said he could not do that and that it would not work satisfactorily. He was very busy and had too many responsibilities. He thought nobody could take better care of a husband than the wife. It was for this purpose that the late Sivakka, the mother of the two idiotic brothers, strove hard and even sold a good portion of the property to see that both the sons were married in her life time. She was particularly unwilling to leave E. P. Gowda at the mercy of his sister-in-law and she fondly hoped that Nagu would take proper care of her husband.

I further asked why such an idiot as E. P. Gowda who did not understand the meaning of sex, women or married life should be married at all by the elders. The schoolmaster and his wife intervened to say that the idiot E. P. Gowda was not so innocent about sex, women and married life. In fact before his marriage sometimes he used to express a desire to dress nicely and get married. Occasionally he used to ask for gifts of money or beedi. When refused or provoked otherwise by somebody, he would shout and threaten that he would go to the man's sister, implying

thereby that he would complain against him to his wife (*Akkanige heluthene baa*).

Further E. P. Gowda's mother was very keen on getting him married. In fact it was her ambition to have him married in her lifetime. Of course the idea was not appreciated by the relatives and others in the village. The late Sivakka often used to go to Kanchur to consult the village deity there. The deity has a reputation for foretelling and curing diseases apart from bringing good luck. It was in the course of one of these visits that she met Nagu's parents and initiated talks about the marriage of E. P. Gowda and Nagu.

Nagu's parents agreed to consider the proposal and were keen on knowing the extent of property and other assets of the groom rather than his fitness and achievements. Shortly afterwards, they visited Kshetra, satisfied themselves as to the property and other assets of the groom. Then they fixed the marriage at Kanchur. All the collaterals except V. P. Gowda were against the marriage. So without giving publicity by way of inviting people to the wedding, the party left Kshetra one early morning and the wedding was over at Kanchur. Since it was a family affair and the girl's parents were themselves willing, people in the village did not say anything against the marriage.

I asked V. P. Gowda how he gave his consent to the wedding of the idiot who hardly knew what marriage was, who did not do any work, who was given to bed-wetting and made a nuisance ground of his dwelling place. Gowda, who wanted to prove that the idiot did have an interest in sex and married life, almost startled me by revealing that the idiot had raped a little girl some 8 or 9 years ago.

Gowda said that his uncle was strongly sex-conscious and hence finding him a wife was the only way of solving all his problems. It was on account of this consideration that he consented to his uncle's wedding. I persuaded Gowda to name the victim of rape or whether he was merely concocting a story. V. P. Gowda evaded giving any particulars of the girl, but he swore that he had given me a very valuable piece of information

just to explain why he gave his consent to the wedding. Since it was a delicate matter, he told me that I should not press him for details as everything was past.

V. P. Gowda further assured me that his uncle, left to himself, would never say that he was unwilling to have his wife back. The trouble was some mischievous people were putting "all sorts of ideas into his head". He swore that if I wanted to know the truth about the matter he would call him and show that he does say he wants his wife back. He explained that of course he did bring his aunt to Kshetra. Her hurried coming to Kshetra was a gesture of her eagerness for reconciliation and reunion. Since she had not brought all her clothes, she had gone back to Kanchur and she would certainly come to Kshetra after a few days.

On the morning of 26th September 1960, I gave a gist of the previous night's discussion to some of my trusted informants at the Rest House, C. G. Odathi, a well informed and astute person, told me almost in one breath that the unfortunate victim of the rape was Sharada, a 6-7 years old girl of the local Jangam family. The incident took place in the Hanuman temple at the opening of the street where E. P. Gowda lives. When the girl cried and raised an alarm, her father and others rushed to the scene and beat up E. P. Gowda severely. Except these peoples very few in the village knew about the incident. He exclaimed, "God only knows the truth". Incidentally, the girl died of some disease a few years afterwards.

Analysis, Comments and Conclusions

The above facts show that there was a good deal of variation in the views and versions given to me by different parties about the case. They were mostly talking on defensive lines and were keen on covering up the incident. Punishing the culprits did not figure so much as did the means of restoring normalcy in the situation. The Lingayat community as such did not show any interest in the event. Even the Jangams as priests were oblivious. It did not concern the community and the religious organization to order punishment of the recalcitrant person. Relationships in

this case were restored as a matter of expediency and did not necessarily present moral issues. The manner in which the incident became a settled matter and lack of strictures among Lingayats compares favourably with other castegroups in Kshetra. Despite kinship obligations, individuals and families enjoy a degree of individualism among the Lingayats.

For all practical purposes, the case was settled without any formal decision taken by the panchayatdars. The situation did not warrant the good offices of the panchayatdars. Although the case had several 'layers' involving several people as it unfolded itself, it soon became a closed chapter. The first sensation turned out to be also the last and ended unceremoniously without arousing further bitterness. This suggests how indigenous methods of restoring normal human relationships, whenever and wherever they are disturbed, are much quicker and pretty cheaper compared to decisions by courts of law.

The different views and versions of the case also serve to show the kind of attitudes and motives the village people in general entertain in respect of various problems of human relations, including the problem of marriage and extra-marital relations. They also serve to show the kind of importance attached to the unity and reputation of the village and the disinclination of the village people to settle their problems—particularly in the social, moral or religious spheres—by seeking the intervention of the law.

An analysis of the above case shows that the village people were not keen on magnifying or complicating the case of adultery. They found out, through persuasion and compromise, a quick and direct solution of the problem. Tactful adjustments were made in restoring normal relations among the people concerned. The considerations of peace and order, unity and reputation of the village were given greater importance than the rights or wrongs of the case. The role of Guruvathi Channappa Gowda illustrates this very well. He was interested in keeping Guruvathi out of picture whatever the reasons or argument of the parties involved in the case. It is interesting to note that even the communal or caste consideration was not allowed

to come in the way of maintaining the village unity and reputation. Channappa Gowda, although a Lingayat, did not take advantage of the situation to punish Soma, the Brahmin bus conductor. Channappa Gowda managed the situation so well by sending away all the people involved in the dispute to their respective places that he did not even give room for arbitration over the case at Guruvathi.

The development and treatment of the case, particularly the different versions of it, illustrate how the attitudes of the different persons were governed by their personal interests and motives. To begin with, what would have perhaps remained as a tolerantly connived-at private affair of Nagu and Soma was purposely developed into a public affair and a case by Basava. Basava after having brought Soma and Nagu as friends, also helped them to have locked up together. This was because of suspicion, misunderstanding and ill-will between him and Soma. Hemanna Budihal, a member of the 'rowdy' party of Kshetra was similarly motivated to see that Soma got into trouble. Hemanna's Talawari mistress, who was earlier a mistress of Soma and who was deserted by him and not rewarded at all, encouraged Hemanna, from an obvious feeling of revenge, to teach Soma a lesson and see that he got into trouble. So Hemanna's role was intended to satisfy his mistress and her people to safeguard his own relations with his mistress.

Basappa Kadale, another member of the 'rowdy' party, had his own interest in the case. He was notorious as a debauchee and would not hesitate to take advantage of a situation like the one presented by the case. He rejoiced in harming others. His role in the 'rowdy' party was motivated by his secret wish to come closer to Nagu.

Above all, V. P. Gowda who had agreed to function as a guardian of Nagu's family, himself seemed to have been closely influenced by his soft corner for Nagu. Nagu had attracted his attention and it was said that he had developed a kind of vested interest in her. Before the coming of Nagu, it seemed that he had similar intimate relations with the wife of B. P. Gowda (elder of the idiotic brothers). When Nagu came, he switched over to her,

leaving the wife of B. P. Gowda enraged and revengeful. The love loss between B. P. Gowda and E. P. Gowda's wife led to a deadlock in the family and the subsequent division of property and appointment of different guardians for the two families.

In the light of V. P. Gowda's interest in Nagu and his relations with her, it becomes intelligible why he tried to explain away the adultery case as something not worth paying heed to, scolded his younger brother, tried to characterise those involved in the incident as innocent and blameless, did not attach a penny worth of importance to the rumours about the morals and misconduct, readily brought back Nagu to Kshetra after the incident, and made out how her coming back to Kshetra was most natural and welcome.

The role of Nagu, the central character in the whole case, was in line with her questionable past, lack of inhibitions and a proven disregard for married life. Born of doubtful parentage, she was smart and quite bold in her dealings. Even before she joined her husband, she seemed to have had affairs as was indicated by the fact that her younger brother was daily sent to Guruvathi from Kshetra to bring flowers, fruits and other eatables. Occasionally she used to distribute these things among her neighbours, who were often perplexed about it. Her parents knowingly had married her to a wealthy idiot. Her disregard or lack of concern for married life was evident from the fact that she sometimes did not feed her husband or even beat him. This teen-age wife scared her husband so much that he would cry and howl and a stare or shout from her was enough to make him nervous and put him to flight. Against such a background, it was obvious that she looked upon marriage as a passport to free life and would probably continue her affairs as before.

The character and interests of Soma contributed not inconsiderably to the adultery case. Because of his interests and activities came to be described as an incorrigible loafer with exceptional sex laxity. He had a knack for making friends of both the sexes, particularly of doubtful character. A few years before the incident, he worked as a conductor on a bus which used to halt overnight at Kshetra. In course of his overnight stays, he made

friends with a number of young men of Kshetra. He told them his desire for female friendship.

The young men of Kshetra plotted to teach Soma a lesson and correct him while he was still in his 20's. By making promises to get him a girl friend, they made him spend lavishly for their snacks and tea in the local tea shop for two days. On the third day they assured him that he would get the company of one of the beautiful girls of the village in an appointed dark room. In the dark, a robust young man dressed as a girl was ready with a lathi and dark liquid paint (*keelenne*). As instructed, the young man remained silent until Soma made steady advances. When he went sufficiently near, the young man beat him up and his other friends rushed in to pour the paint on his face and clothes. After this humiliation Soma did not show his face in Kshetra again. It was only afterwards that he started working on the bus at Guruvathi. Once again at Guruvathi also he got involved in a scandalous affair.

The different views and versions of the case throw light on the villagers' attitude to the institutions of marriage and property. Marriage is looked upon as something which is most natural and which must invariably happen to everybody whether of sound or unsound body or mind. Indeed, if a person happens to be abnormal or idiotic, marriage is regarded as all the more necessary for him as a corrective, curative or balancing influence. Further, marriage is looked upon as an arrangement by which to provide care and stability to the mentally imbalanced. These considerations can be seen to underlie the marriages of the two idiotic brothers and particularly E. P. Gowda's marriage where his wife was looked upon as his caretaker.

Marriage is also looked upon as a means of perpetuation of the family line and not even the mentally imbalanced or the idiotic are debarred from perpetuating the family line through marriage. Commenting on this, V. P. Gowda explained that there is nothing wrong in idiots perpetuating the family line. For, the children of an idiot need not be idiotic. Indeed, they can turn out to be very clever and smart. He cited in support of his view how all the four children of the idiotic

B. P. Gowda were quite normal and smart how the eldest boy was doing very well at the school.

Finally, the above considerations play a vital role in governing the institution of marriage because marriages are arranged. While the parents or elders hold the responsibility of marriage of their sons and daughters, it is often accomplished without getting the latter's consent. The choice of elders is conceded to by the children. The familiar logic is : don't the parents have a role to play in the future of their children? Will they whimsically sacrifice their child's future? They surely think of the safety and security especially of the daughters given away in marriage. In this scheme of arranged marriages, the permanent assets of the groom's family and often not the achievements of the groom himself are taken into consideration. However, on many occasions, the groom and bride are too young to understand the social, moral and jural implications of marriage.

Since marriages are arranged as a matter of course and in a businesslike fashion with due regard to the various considerations of property, family line and as a curative or balancing influence the young or the imbalanced, so far the arranged marriages do not seem to have raised the problem of incompatibility between husband and wife on any serious scale in village India. This is so, firstly, because the young boys and girls who are married and put under the guidance of elders have plenty of time and scope to understand and adjust and this takes away the string of incompatibility. Secondly, the accent is always on finding happiness in living together and getting along rather than seeking fulfilment in asserting individualities. However, all this does not amount to saying that the problem of incompatibility is successfully solved without any remainder. It appears in regular exceptions and deviations—of which Nagu is an example—and society accommodates such exceptions and deviations by taking a lenient and concessional view of them as long as they do not disturb the fabric of normal social relationships.

In summary, contrary to the popular view that the villagers are simple, ignorant and straightforward, here is a case which shows how village life is characterized by complex set of interests

and relationships and how intricate and subtle is the business of organized living. To the ordinary villager in India, the philosophy of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*, is no doubt important. But in day-to-day life, *artha* and *kama* take precedence over *dharma* and *moksha*. That considerations of woman and wealth rather than the exalted Upanishadic and often obscure spiritual ideals of *Dharma* and *Moksha*, lend tangible attractions and colour all activities—good and bad—in the community emerges from an analysis of the above case.

Also it becomes clear from the above case how the Veerasaiva Community as a whole is much more liberal in its attitude towards certain social and moral problems where the other caste-groups are rather stringent. Among the Brahmanical as well as the other non-Lingayat caste-groups a similar case of adultery or a widow becoming pregnant would be treated as serious moral lapses. The guilty persons would be excommunicated, made to pay fine, and a communal dinner before being admitted into the caste. In extreme cases as it happened with the Kshatriyas once, *Ghata Shradha* (conducting mortuary rites while alive) might be performed with reference to persons violating morals as well as caste rules and regulations.

Generally the family, the kin, caste-fellows and finally the priestly order will bring about censure motion and pass strictures against one's conduct and relationships. But among Lingayats, not only with reference to the case under study but even serious issues like a widow bearing a child to a low caste servant, or beating one another with sandals have not been treated any differently. Both the community and the priestly caste have been oblivious. The Jangams served such families on both normal and ritual occasions, while such families also had normal social relationships with others of the same caste in the village.

This suggests not only liberalism but perhaps lack of control. Since there is no strong and centrally organized religious authority, while individual Lingayat family owe allegiance to Heads of different Mutts, the local Jangam can hardly exercise control. The diverse elements that have gone into Veerasaivism, occupational and customary differences among sub-castes, and

the large size of the community implies both advantages and disadvantages. However, it must be said that the Veerasaiva attitude towards life and morals is a lot more liberal than it obtains in traditional Hinduism.

Table No. 2 Characters Appearing in the Case

1. B. P. Gowda and	}	Idiotic brothers, Panchachara
2. E. P. Gowda		Lingayats of Kshetra.
3. Nagu		Wife of E. P. Gowda, Adultress.
4. Soma		A Brahmin bus conductor involved in adultery.
5. Basava		A dismissed bus cleaner, Potter youth of Guruvathi, who played a crucial role in developing the case.
6. Chandra Gowda	}	The Kshetra party which rounded up and locked up Nagu and Soma in a room at Guruvathi.
7. Basappa Kadale and		
8. Hemanna Budihal		
9. D. Angadi	}	Elderly Lingayat Panchayatdars from Kshetra.
10. B. Pujari		
11. S. Kadale & others		
12. Channappa Gowda		Lingayat bill collector of Guruvathi.
13. V. P. Gowda		Elder brother of Chandra Gowda and guardian of E. P. Gowda and Nagu (2 and 3 above).
14. P. P. Gowda		A collateral and guardian of B. P. Gowda (1 above).
15. Sivakka		Deceased mother of B. P. & E. P. Gowda (1 & 2 above).
16. Ayya	}	Father of Nagu
17. Halesh		Younger brother of Nagu
18. Sharada		A Jangam girl of 6-7 years, victim of rape by E. P. Gowda (2 above).

CHAPTER V

RELIGION, ECONOMIC LIFE AND FUNCTIONAL INTERDEPENDENCE

The Veerasaivas of Karnataka have often been described by the Europeans especially the British administrators as 'Puritans of the East'. They were not exactly attracted by the anti-Brahmanical notions such as their non-recognition of ritual pollution. The Veerasaiva enterprising nature in economic activities such as trade, agriculture and other occupations the group as a whole is engaged in have in fact earned them the appreciation of the Westerners.

The economic activities and values underlying these activities in traditional Hinduism have brought about a graded occupational hierarchy, wherein manual work ranks lower compared to learning and scholarship. This kind of gradational values have stifled economic activities in India. Economic activities instead of fostering secular values and outlook have for long carried with them attributes of 'purity' and 'impurity'. Therefore some activities are characterized as high and others as low. The low attributes of work being invariably associated with lower caste status. Thus caste status and rank to some extent are connected with economic activities. This is how the attribute of traditional occupation of a caste and its status buttress one another. Veerasaivas have no traditional occupation although there are occupational groups among them. But attributes of superiority and inferiority of occupations is contrary to Veerasaiva Philosophy and practice.

It would be a fascinating study to attempt to what extent the Veerasaiva ethic could be held responsible for the development of such secular and rational outlook towards economic activities. Could it be analogous to the ideology described by Weber in *his Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*? the village study on which I am basing my arguments perhaps is inadequate to

draw generalizations. But still the Veerasaivas of Kshetra can certainly be described as 'puritans' among the people of Kshetra. Below I shall, however, elaborate the theme to substantiate the puritan attributes, especially in the sphere of economic activities among Lingayats.

The social and cultural settings in which the puritans of the west and Veerasaivas operate makes the comparison limited in extent and scope if not totally untenable. It was the Protestants who rebelled against the "Laxity and Corruption" of Roman Catholicism. There was some common religious background. The leaders as well as the followers were all christians and the movement was not anti-christian.

Veerasaivism on the other hand was a rebellion against the 'rigidity' of Brahmanical religion. The leader of the movement was himself a Brahmin, but his supporters were recruited from different castes. The diverse castes which united in the pursuit of a common religious goal, were only partly successful. It was anti-Brahmanical and fought against the inequalities of caste status.

Because of some fundamental differences as indicated above it is difficult to apply the Weberian theory of *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* unreservedly to an analysis of Veerasaiva social structure. According to Weber, even among Protestant sects, it was Calvin's teachings that diffused a trend for the growth of modern capitalism in the West.

This 'spirit' is in contrast to other varieties of capitalism which have existed in all ages among all nations. In fact, Weber sums up the differences between Luther's and Calvin's teachings wherein the former's religious life exhibited a bent towards mysticism and emotionalism, the latter to asectic action. But Tawney sums up "the 'capitalist spirit' is as old as history, and was not, as has sometimes been said the offspring of puritanism. But it found in certain aspects of later puritanism a tonic which braced its energies and fortified its already vigorous temper."²

The Veerasaiva way of looking at economic life was certainly distinct from the Brahmanical view from the beginning. To some extent, it established a new conception of 'vocation' and thus

today accounts for the enterprising zeal that is found among Veerasaivas. Basava and his colleague Ekanthada Ramayya were the active preachers of Veerasaiva tenets in the first instance. Together they prepared the way for a new race of free thinkers by condemning many of the Brahmanical practices.

Veerasaivism from the beginning insisted that every individual should follow a vocation to earn his living and use the surplus for the good of others and in religious duty such as feeding Jangams. It proclaimed "even if it should be God himself, he should have a vocation".³ A person should earn his living before being generous to others and he should not be a parasite on others' earnings. Thus emerged the concept of "*Kayakave Kailasa*" or work is heaven.

Scope and Limitations :

The above theme was new to Hindu Philosophy including the *Nishkama Karma* concept of Bhagvad Gita. Brahmanical religion always looked down on manual labour with aversion. Accordingly some occupations were 'pure' and others 'impure'. This led to an enormous proliferation of a rigid caste system based on occupational differences. Since Veerasaivism emphasized the importance of manual labour it came into collision with Brahmanical religious principles. Veerasaivism declared that manual labour is not degrading. Hence those castes which followed occupations involving manual labour, such as leather work, need not necessarily be looked down upon. In short the emphasis was on a person's ability to earn by working and not the nature of the work done.

The Brahmanical religion with its principles of *Karma* and metempsychosis had laid stress on an individual's developing ascetic tendencies to keep detached from worldly activities as an insurance against rebirth and to attain *mukti*. Veerasaivism, on the contrary, upheld the value of active life with every worldly interest. It ensured a blissful life on this earth itself, in one's lifetime, to the devoted individual who learnt and observed 'systematic self-control'.⁴ One of the most important fact of 'systematic self-control' consisted in following a vocation, in not being extravagant.

In contrast to the Brahmanical conception of asceticism, which is conceived as a means of relieving the individual from the shackles of worldly life, and of assuring him a better life in his next reincarnation or in the other world, Veerasaivism effected a "transformation of asceticism to activity within the World".⁶ A good and useful life on this earth was all that was commended by the Veerasaiva Philosophy.

Kshetra Veerasaivas and Enterprising Economic Behaviour⁶

Wherever Veerasaivas are in a majority, they are the most enterprising people, holding key economic positions. In Kshetra landholding, management of shops, tea-shops, government posts are all a monopoly of the Veerasaiva community. This enterprising nature could certainly be linked with the liberal ethics of Veerasaivism, which commends everyone to work to earn his living and find heaven in work. The Veerasaiva precepts and practices are certainly opposed to traditional Hinduism which preaches withdrawing from worldly activities in the name of religion and attainment of salvation to individual soul. In traditional Hinduism economic activities are graded into 'pure' and 'impure' and certain kinds of activities are prohibited to upper castes. For instance Manu forbade the Brahmin from tilling the soil or handling liquor and leather.

This overall divergence in religious approach as regards economic activity, views and ways of life certainly makes the Veerasaivas of Kshetra puritans among the Hindus there. The following table gives details of population landholding and other economic activities in Kshetra.

From the table it becomes clear that Veerasaivas as a group own and cultivate the largest acreage in Kshetra. Landownership is almost the status symbol and economic security in village India. The Lingayats are numerically preponderant and the share of landed property held by them is also the largest.

Further 20 out of 22 village moneylenders come from the Lingayat castegroup and fourteen people among them also lend grain. Cotton and groundnuts are the main cashcrops grown in the village and the neighbourhood. Two Lingayat men have

Table 1 Details of Landless & Landholding Castegroups and Households in Kshetra

Caste Groups	Extent of land owned by Households in Acres					Landless Households	Total Households	Average Landholding per	
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20& above			Head	Household
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Lingayat Panchachara	25	30	25	8	23	22	133	1.92	10.05
2. Hander-ahuta	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	0.00	0.00
3. Sadaru	1	2	1	1	—	3	8	1.24	5.88
4. Banajiga	6	1	3	—	1	5	16	1.18	5.38
5. Sivasimpiga	—	—	—	2	—	2	4	0.91	8.00
6. Lingayat Potter	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	0.40	2.00
7. Lingayat Barber	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	0.00	0.00
8. Jangam	3	1	—	—	—	2	6	0.52	2.33
9. Brahmin	—	2	—	—	2	—	4	3.28	14.75
10. Kshatriya	2	—	—	—	3	4	9	2.58	28.06
11. Panchala	7	3	—	—	—	4	14	0.58	3.17
12. Kuruba	27	11	5	5	1	8	57	1.19	5.87
13. Maratha	2	3	—	—	—	8	13	0.41	2.15
14. Sethi Banajiga	1	—	1	—	—	1	3	0.94	5.33
15. Barike	5	5	2	—	—	7	19	0.73	3.90
16. Muslim	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	0.00	0.00
17. Pinjari	—	1	2	—	—	1	4	1.32	9.25
18. Talawari	6	1	2	—	—	4	13	0.47	3.80
19. Agasa	3	—	—	—	—	6	9	0.10	0.44
20. Cheluvadi	2	—	—	—	—	2	4	0.33	1.50
21. Kanchaveera	4	2	—	—	—	1	7	1.00	3.16
22. Madiga	16	—	—	—	—	12	28	0.06	0.29
Total	111	62	41	16	30	98	358		

taken to wholesale dealing in cotton and groundnut. Further twentytwo out of a total of 26 grocery shops are owned and run by Lingayats. In addition 6 out of 7 small tea-shops in the village and 2 larger ones at the Bus-stand are owned and managed by the Lingayats.

The village headman is a Lingayat, while all the six teachers in the local school are Lingayats. Another four Lingayat teachers are working in the neighbouring villages and one of them is working at Dharwar. Another person from Kshetra is also working in Dharwar as an assistant in the Veterinary Hospital. While one more Lingayat served as a bill collector in the village Panchayat Board of the neighbouring village and also as a Bus Agent. In contrast to Lingayats, not many from other castes are holding salaried posts either in the village or elsewhere. There are practically none among the non-Lingayats and Untouchables. Only among the Brahmins and Kshatriyas a couple of persons are employed elsewhere.

Nearly 8-10 Lingayat boys are attending secondary school in nearby townships and another 3-4 boys are in colleges. While one graduated in medicine and now is abroad in U.S.A. His wife though just literate, joined him later along with her son. Formal education has not made any headway among non-Lingayats and Untouchables, while 4-5 Kshatriya boys are studying in schools and colleges.

When the village received electricity in February 1960, two Lingayats installed Flour Mills and nearly 20 Lingayat households were electrified. Four out of eight farmers who installed pumpsets were Lingayats. Hence irrigation was taken advantage of by those Lingayats who could afford. Irrigation facilities were intended to raise vegetables and fruits as cash-crops. Banana and Gauva fruits are raised. Brinjal, Chillie, Tomato, Onion and other vegetables are raised both for sale and domestic consumption.

Nearly 260 households own some land in Kshetra and 134 among them are Lingayats. While there are 61 landless households among other caste-groups, there are only 37 landless among the Lingayats in Kshetra. Out of 142 owner-cultivators

*

93 are Veerasaivas and the remaining 49 are spread in all the other caste-groups. The extent of landholding as laid out in the following table highlights, that by and large Lingayats are mostly associated with land ownership and cultivation and that largest acreages in the range of 50-100 are also owned by the Lingayats. The varied economic activities, landownership and business makes the Lingayats, the magnates in the village, also the most enterprising and industrious group.

Table II Number of Farming households in Kshetra

Caste Groups	House-holds	One Plough	Two Plough	Three Plough
1. Panchachara Lingayat	82	62	18	2
2. Banajiga "	4	3	1	—
3. Sadaru "	4	3	1	—
4. Sivasimpi;a "	2	2	—	—
5. Jangam "	1	1	—	—
6. Kuruba "	21	17	3	1
7. Barike "	3	3	—	—
8. Talawari "	6	6	—	—
9. Pinjari "	3	2	1	—
10. Maratha "	2	2	—	—
11. Sethi Banajiga "	1	1	—	—
12. Panchala "	1	1	—	—
13. Brahmin "	1	1	—	—
14. Kanchaveera "	2	1	1	—
15. Madiga "	9	9	—	—
Total	142	114	25	3

Not only the largest per centage of land is owned by Lingayats, but it is also cultivated by them. In addition any land that is available for cultivation on the basis of lease or share-cropping is cultivated mostly by Lingayats. The Kshatriyas and Brahmins who own some land depend upon Lingayat tenants for cultivation of land.

The Kshetra Linga Temple has 662.26 acres of land mostly fertile black cotton soil. Nearly 351.82 acres is leased to tenants once in five years. The tenants bid for the temple land in auction and the amount thus received constitute the temple funds. During 1957, six out of the seven successful bidders were lingayats. When pilgrims come in large numbers to Kshetra during major festivals in the temple in February, May and December, many Lingayat families open temporary stalls to sell coconut, plantain and similar ceremonial objects used for worship in the temple. Also they sell eatables. Since a good number of pilgrims also come on bullock carts, manure collection and toll collections are auctioned by the village Panchayat Board and the amount released constitutes panchayat revenue. Successful bidders here usually are Lingayats.

These and similar economic enterprises make the Kshetra Lingayat community easily the richest in the village. The economic drive which stems from Veerasaiva tenets and liberal philosophy seem to have enabled the Veerasaivas to dominate the village economically. In recent years this has also encouraged them to try to dominate the village politically.

The liberal ethics has nearly done away with the principles of ritual pollution as opposed to ritual purity. While among the Brahmins and Kshatriyas a good deal of adherence to 'tradition' is in vogue, among the Lingayats, on the contrary, there is a considerable degree of liberalism. Veerasaivism has promoted secular pursuits and economic activities of many kinds. Economic diversity thus has received an impetus from religion. While orthodox Hinduism inhibits pursuit of economic activities, Veerasaivism with its liberal philosophy of *Kayakave Kailasa* has encouraged the growth of a variety of economic activities,

Strictly speaking Lingayats have no traditional occupation in the sense we find it applicable to Traditional Hinduism. There are many occupational groups among Lingayats such as priestly duties, business, tailoring, potter, barber, washerman, oilman and perhaps many more in addition to agriculture and white collar jobs. The kind and degree of economic diversity is unique in Veerasaivism and compares favourably with any other religious group in India. In fact Veerasaivism seems to be a

rare exception to include within its fold so many occupational groups. This certainly is due to the liberal philosophy behind the economic drive in Veerasaivism.

Agricultural economy and Functional Interdependence

I am concerned here primarily with an analysis of agricultural economy as it obtains in village India in general and Kshetra in particular. I shall analyse the forces at work that calls for cooperation, mutual help between an agriculturist and other servicing caste-groups drawn into it and also point out areas of tension under changing conditions. A good deal of existing literature on caste system at some points have considered inter-caste economic relationships.

The *jajmani* system, or the accounts given by such authors as wiser, Beidelman, Leach and Iswaran, regarding the nature of rural economic institutions and functional interdependence among caste-groups have ranged from almost complete 'economic determinism' to loose statements of 'give and take' exchange of 'gifts' or transactions. It appears to me as essential to clear up a lot of unnecessary rationalization and speculation that pervades the available literature by pointing out possible dimensions of looking at the working of the village economic systems. To substantiate this, I shall draw upon the field data from Kshetra, where I did my field work during 1959-60

While a majority of castes are associated with one or the other traditional occupation, it would be far from truth to suggest that caste groups function as entities and intercaste relationships as always severally restricted. In fact in the social, economic, political and religious matters there is a good deal of interdependence among caste-groups. The functional unity in diversity and notions of solidarity and mutual interdependence outweigh narrow caste and sub-caste loyalties and act as binding forces to cement the relationships.

I am concerned here mainly with an analysis of economic relationships although incidentally I would be touching upon the ritual and political nature of relationships as well. The subsistence agricultural economy dominates the Indian rural life.

Kshetra has a dry cultivable land of 3,573 acres and 46 cents, out of which as much as 2,431 acres and 44 cents is owned and cultivated by the villagers. In Table III are laid out details of households and landholding in Kshetra. Jowar is a staple crop, while cotton and groundnut are the main cash crops. Occupa-

Table III. Details of households, Population and Landholding in Kshetra

Caste-Groups	Households	Population	Percentage	Landholding Acres-Cents	Percentage
1. Panchachara Lingayat	133	734	38.0	1,405.43	57.8
a) Banajiga	16	73	3.8	86.00	7.4
b) Sadaru	8	38	2.0	47.00	
c) Sivasimpiga	4	35	1.8	32.00	
d) Handerahuta	1	5	0.3	0.00	
2. Potter	1	5	0.3	2.00	0.05
3. Barber	2	15	0.7	0.05	
4. Jangam	6	27	1.4	14.00	
5. Kuruba	57	281	14.6	334.50	13.7
6. Mararha	13	69	3.6	28.00	0.2
7. Barike	19	101	5.2	74.05	3.1
8. Sethi Banajiga	3	17	0.8	16.00	0.7
9. Pinjari	4	28	1.5	37.00	1.5
10. Muslim	3	13	0.7	0.00	—
11. Talawari	13	104	5.4	49.37	2.0
12. Agasa	9	40	2.1	4.00	0.2
13. Brahmin	4	18	0.9	59.00	2.4
14. Kshatriya	9	63	3.3	162.50	6.8
15. Panchala	14	76	4.0	44.34	1.7
16. Cheluvadi	4	18	0.9	6.00	0.2
17. Kanchaveera	7	22	1.1	22.00	0.9
18. Madiga	28	147	7.6	8.25	0.4
Total	358	1,929	100.0	2,431.44	100.0

tional attribute of castes, as one of the determinants of status and rank has come down from the the times of Manu. Agriculture is the only exception which could be undertaken by all castes, while Manu forbade Brahmins from tilling the soil. Traditional occupation of castes, if any, are also shown in Table IV.

Table IV Approximate Hierarchical position of caste-Groups in Kshetra and Traditional Occupation

A. Twice-Born

- | | | |
|--|-----|--------------------|
| 1. Brahmin | ... | Scholar and Priest |
| 2. Kshatriya | ... | Warrior and Ruler |
| 3. Panchala | ... | Smithy |
| (Artisans like Carpenter and Blacksmith) | | |

B. Veerasaivas

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| 1. Jangam | ... | Priest |
| 2. Panchachara Lingayat | ... | Agriculture |
| a) Handerahuta | „ | Cowherd |
| b) Banajiga | „ | Trade |
| c) Sivasimpiga | „ | Tailoring |
| d) Sadaru | „ | Agriculture |
| 3. Potter | „ | Manufacturing mud pots |
| 4. Barber | „ | Shaving and hair cutting |

C. Non-Brahmins

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--|
| 5. Kuruba | ... | Shepherd |
| 6. Maratha | ... | Militaryman |
| 7. Sethi-Banjiga | ... | |
| 8. Barike | ... | Playing boats, village menial water supplier |
| 9. Muslim | ... | |
| 10. Pinjari | ... | Cotton carder |
| 11. Talawari | ... | Village menial, watchman |
| 12. Agasa (Washerman) | ... | Washerman |

D. Untouchables

- | | | |
|---------------|-----|--|
| 13. Cheluvadi | ... | Play Pipe Music, Agricultural Labourer |
|---------------|-----|--|

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 14. Kanchaveera | ... |
| 15. Madiga | ... Village servants and agricultural labourers, leather workers. |

A glance at the tables drives home that some caste-groups have been associated with traditional occupations, while others are not. Even among the Veerasaivas we have occupational groups which is against the spirit of Basava, the exponent of the Veerasaiva tenets in 12th century. While land is owned by most of the caste-groups, cultivation as will be shown below is done by a limited number of farmers.

That occupations and different occupational groups remain complementary to one another is understandable. To what extent or are there limits to such relationships needs further analysis of economic allocation and roles. This would also involve the analysis of ritual and political interrelationships.

In Kshetra the priestly services of a Brahmin are not accepted by the Veerasaivas and vice-versa. While the Panchalas have their own priests, the Setti-Banajigas lack priests and are not served directly by a Brahmin or Jangam priest. The Muslims and Pinjaris have their own priests. Thus considered, the ritual structure of the village is not homogenous but reveals heterogeneity of relationships. There is not a single caste which can make overriding claims to forge ritual unity. In fact, many castes might also have their own priests in addition to being served by priestly castes. Kurubas and Madigas in Kshetra are a case in point.

The point I want to emphasise is that not all Brahmins, Jangams and Panchalas are ritual specialists, officiating over religious and life-cycle ceremonies. One or two from each caste-group are sufficient to cater to the ritual needs of communities they serve. Hence a vast majority has to depend upon other occupations which are by no means secondary but primary only.

The Kshatriyas of Kshetra are neither warriors nor rulers. They own and manage a large saivite temple which is a regional cult centre. They too act as 'high priests' among the followers of the cult. Temple land, festival collections and voluntary contribu-

tions made by the followers of the cult help the Kshatriyas to maintain themselves. Similarly Kurubas are not shepherds. Nor are the Pinjaris cotton carders in kshetra. They are all agriculturists.

No Madiga family in Kshetra is known for its skill in leather work. Although 2 or 3 families are able to manufacture crude leather articles, this in itself is not their main occupation. They earn their living largely as agricultural labourers. They are discriminated and easily the lowest position is held by them in the caste hierarchy. Part of this is because they are poor and dependent on others for earning a living. Also they remove any dead cattle of the caste-Hindu patrons, skin the animal and are alleged to eat beef and carrion. Thus it is actually a combination of factors that helps to lower their status. They alone live in an isolated colony of their own while the other two Untouchable caste-groups live in the midst of the village interspersed among caste-Hindus.

The above Examples, I think will suffice to explain, how the concept of 'traditional occupation' often do not have a direct bearing and determine the caste status, and to a certain extent intercaste relationships as well.

Agriculture and complementary Relationships

The functional or organic unity and the complementary nature of occupations is discernible especially in agricultural economy. Before I discuss the nature and function of *jajmani* system known as *Aya* in the Vernacular, I shall refer the reader to Table-I with regard to details of landless, landholding and farming households in Kshetra and to Table. II for the number of farming households in Kshetra.

From Table-I on page 68 it is clear that there are as many as 98 households spread in all castegroups who do not have any land. While Table II on page 70 highlights that not all land owners are in fact cultivators. Only 142 households are engaged in farming activities representing a majority of caste groups.

This brings me to the point to consider in full, the nature of economic, political and ritual interdependence between the far

mers and the servicing castes, whose services are essential to an agriculturist, I refer to this as patron-client relationships. These services are not available uniformly to all agriculturists. The patron-client relationship in one situation may be different from another situation, i.e. a patron can become a client and vice-versa, with reference to different economic and ritual roles that each will play. For some services caste status acts as a deterrent, while for others it is not. Barber-washermen services in relation to Untouchable castegroups blacksmith carpenter services to Untouchable farmers is a case in point.

Most of the agricultural patrons, if they also belong to upper castegroups will show a tendency to dominate politically over the servicing castes that are usually low in status. The servicing castes remain subordinate and submit to the juridical powers of the patrons. This is only a general tendency, while in actual practice in some cases it may be the other way round.

The institution of Hanneradu Ayagars

Traditionally the *Jajmani* system seems to have covered the the entire village, people and castegroups with special roles, so that it has come down to be identified as "*Hanneradu Ayagaru*" or "*Bara Baluti*" in the vernacular. They are : *Gowda, Banakara, Badagi, Kammara, Akkasale, Kumbara, Kshourika, Barike, Talawari, Agasa, Cheluvadi and Madiga* (village headman, village ritual leader, carpenter, blacksmith, goldsmith, potter, barber, barike connected with water services, Talawari associated with watch and ward of the village, Agasa-washerman services, Cheluvadi specialist services of pipers on ritual and festive occasions and Madiga as traditional village servant discharging manial duties).

A glance at the list of *Ayagars* indicate their position, duties, responsibilities as well as privileges they were entitled to. The village Headman was incharge of the political and judicial administration of the village. He was assisted in his duties by other functionaries like the Barike, Talawari and Madiga. Their roles were different, graded but complementary. Thus all of their services were considered important for the maintenance of solidarity and unity in the village. In Kshetra, the village Headman

who is functioning these days side by side the elected Panchayat Board, is in fact assisted in the discharge of his duties by the Barike, Talawari and Madigas.

The role of the *Banakara* or the ritual leader of the village is very important. All the village festivals, weddings and other ritual gatherings are necessarily participated by a *Banakara*. His consent is very essential to fix the date for a festival or a wedding. In Kshetra the Lingayat Sadaru family provides village ritual leadership.

Badagi, Kammara, Akkasale, Kumbara, Kshourika Agasa and Cheluvadi have all special roles in the village economy and religious festivities. Their services, therefore, are recognized as very essential to the economy to function properly. These services are also ritualized in order to strengthen the intercaste interdependence.

To me, it appears that in the organization of *Hanneradu Ayagaras*, every constituent person /caste was necessarily in terms of his/its roles. The roles in addition to being complementary were indispensable. In a sense each role and actor was important in itself and in relation to others. Individual actors and roles are subsumed by the supreme principle of mutual interdependence. It is in this sense the village community life was homogenous, well integrated whole rather than of heterogenous parts.

The social, economic, political and ritual structures are so inextricably interwoven necessitating different roles to be played by different castes. So there is unity in diversity. There is thus a good deal of 'organic solidarity'. This interdependence perhaps gave rise to the notion of village self-sufficiency or villages as being self-sufficient Republics.

Also the organisation of *Hanneradu Ayagaras* is an highly formalised body is evident from the fact that how an animal sacrificed to the village deity on festival occasions was parcelled out. Each *Ayagara* was entitled to get a particular portion of the sacrificial animal. Vegetarians among them naturally made over their share to other *Ayagaras*. During weddings, agricultural operations, first ploughing, sowing and harvesting; precedence based on roles as *Ayagaras* were observed and betel-nut, grain or other

things were earmarked to be distributed among the *Ayagars* by the individual patron.

The Cheluvadi pipers services, particularly in village festivals entitled them to obtain payment in kind from the villagers. So also the services of the Madigas for the village community apart from the agricultural patrons were rewarded by payment in kind at the time of harvest.

Factors of Change

Till now the description deals mostly with inter-caste interdependence while playing complementary roles. But these roles as already suggested are graded. Some are superior and others inferior, but all are considered important to the smooth working of the village community. This is an ideal picture of a village where everyone has a fixed position, roles, responsibilities and privileges. In actual practice, however, changes were possible. Several causes could be attributed to account for these changes. The idea of service self-sufficiency, solidarity and unity of village has been considered very important.

Political de-centralization has reduced the importance of the roles of the village Headman. With the introduction of the Panchayati Raj and elected leaders, the position and roles of the Headman are greatly undermined.

Population explosion is one of the important factors which upsets the balance between the patron-client or *Ayagars*. While land remains constant, multiplication of families do not necessarily lead to duplication of services. So that specialized services as rendered by servicing castes are gradually reduced in their importance and dimension.

Introduction of modern machinery for purposes of cultivation involve technical knowledge and traditional skills like carpentry lose their value.

Further the introduction of cash crops has linked the village market with wider areas, so that the village ceases to be a centre of production, distribution and consumption. Correspondingly intercaste relationships are realigned. These should be borne in

mind while attempting to analyse the importance or otherwise of complementary roles.

With these few observations, I shall present below how actually the *Aya* system is working in Kshetra. It is essentially institutionalized and enduring. Intercaste relationships lasts for generations. Also a good sentimental attachment characterizes the relationship. Payment for services are mostly made in kind and seldom in cash. Payment in kind presupposes possession of landed property. Land ownership confers prestige and gives economic security. In this all services flow from one direction (servicing castes) while all payment comes from the other direction (agricultural patrons). This is neither 'gift' nor can it be characterized as 'transactions' or 'give and take' policy. Such general statements are misleading and contrary to the institutional nature of this system.

The Logic of give and take

There are definite rules of payment as there are prescribed roles to play. But this itself does not provide economic security to the servicing castes nor there is need on the part of the patrons to compete among themselves to secure the services of the clients. There is no economic determinism, although services are paid for. The relationship surpasses caste boundaries, becomes sentimental and sometimes is articulated in kinship terms. It is well known how a caste Hindu patron considered his Untouchable client as "*Halemaga*" (old son), while patrons are usually addressed as "*dhani*" '*tande*' (master, father) and so forth. To this extent, discussions on the nature of *jajmani* relationships till now have failed to come to grips with how it actually works in village India.

In Kshetra, village agricultural economy and traditional relationships come under the *Aya* or *jajmani* system. But in this the scope of participation is limited to few caste-groups only. It is confined to the services of the carpenter, blacksmith, barber, washerman and untouchable Madiga.

All the five services may be available to an agriculturist or only a few are available. Yet the nature of relationship is

binding to a large extent. In some cases breaches occur making room for change and realignments. Where inevitable, because of bad relationships, non-payment of grain or unsatisfactory services traditional relationships are broken. These are individual cases and do not affect the entire range of services. Also a client can pawn his rights to another person if he is indebted to him. The patron cannot object or reject it. The patron and client sometimes may also accuse one another for unsatisfactory work or unsatisfactory payment. As far as *Aya* relationships are concerned, give more and receive less or vice-versa have no meaning.

The enduring relationships are of hereditary character, but they are not 'eternal'. Changes are effected occasionally and so notions of *Dharma* and *Karma* cannot be said to deter one from breaking relationships. Economic and ritual interdependence are not ends in themselves. They are means to stabilize relationships, regulate roles, responsibilities and privileges. Economic rewards are very much in sight and are meticulously calculated. If the relationship is not worthy, conditions of service are altered or in extreme cases dropped as a matter of fact.

Several local conditions militate against the undisturbed continuity of traditional relationships. In addition to changes, family misfortunes or change of occupation might require people to dispense with certain services, while in other cases it may not be possible or desirable. Below I shall give details of inter-caste relationship based on *Aya* or *Jajmani* system in Kshetra.

From the table below dealing with the patron-client relationships between an agriculturist and servicing castes, it is evident that while bulk of all servicing castes are involved in *Jajmani* relationships with the Panchachara Lingayat, majority of whom are also cultivators. With regard to other castes in village the services vary greatly.

With the exception of carpenter and blacksmith services, all other services, are denied to untouchable caste groups, hence there is no room for enduring relationships. The services of Madiga clients are taken only by 129 households which includes

Table V. Details of Aya-Servicing and Payment Mode

Castewise Agricultural Housholds		26 Madiga service + Households payment in kind	7 washermen service households payment in kind	7 Panchala Service households payment		2 Barber service households payment	
				Kind	Cash	Kind	Cash
1. Panchachara		75	73	45	37	123	9
	Lingayat						
2. Banajiga	"	2	5	1	3	12	2
3. Sadaru	"	5	4	2	2	5	—
4. Handerahuta	"	—	—	—	—	—	1
5. Shiva Simpiga	"	—	2	—	2	4	1
6. Potter	"	—	1	—	—	1	—
7. Barber	"	—	2	—	—	—	—
8. Jangam	"	1	1	—	1	6	—
9. Brahmin	"	2	4	1	—	4	—
10. Kshatriya	...	1	1	—	—	9	—
11. Panchala	...	8	8	—	—	12	1
12. Kuruba	...	21	8	13	8	47	10
13. Maratha	...	1	1	—	2	12	3
14. Setti Banajiga	...	—	—	—	1	3	—
15. Barike	...	2	3	1	2	18	3
16. Muslim	...	—	—	—	—	2	—
17. Pinjari	...	2	—	1	2	4	—
18. Talawari	...	7	3	4	2	12	1
19. Agasa	...	2	—	—	—	8	1
20. Kanchaveera	...	—	—	1	1	—	—
21. Madiga	...	—	—	5	4	—	—
22. Cheluvadi	...	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total		129	116	74	67	282	32

both the agriculturists and non-agriculturists. For instance 8 panchala households and 2 washermen take Madiga services though they belong to non-farming households. The Madigas supply red earth to all the caste-Hindu households on festive occasions. Red earth is extensively used for plastering the inner

walls and kitchen. For these and similar ritual services Madigas are given food by caste-Hindu households, while the Barbers pay grain/cash.

For purposes of ritual services on festival occasions like supplying red earth to caste-Hindus, services at weddings, conveying news of death, or carrying the dead cattle for disposal from a caste-Hindu household, the 28 Madiga households in Kshetra are organised into 8 units. This is based on lineage grouping and is concerned with discharging the above duties. Madiga households do the duty annually by turns for the entire village. This organization is known as *Hirethana*. These duties and privileges fall outside the patron-client relationship. For these services Madigas are paid cash, food, and some times substantial gifts like a metal dish or clothes.

Madiga services to agricultural patron unlike the *Hirethana* duties are specific and confined to certain families. The Madiga client supplies annually to his agricultural patron 3-4 leather articles like sandals, rope and whip. For this he is paid 80 seers of jowar by his patron annually. This is known as *Kattaya* (fixed) payment, where the quantity of grain is matched against the quantity of leather articles. Any extra services rendered by the client occasionally are paid in kind, cash, food and clothes.

Susaya (overflowing payment, full) is payment in kind during harvest season for the services rendered at the time in the thrashing yard. The Madiga client helps the patron in harvesting crops until the grain are stored. During the period the patron feeds the client. When jowar is cleaned in the wind by a winnowing pan, certain quantity of jowar deposits outside the area earmarked. All the grain beyond the boundary line belong to the Madiga client. While carting the jowar for storage, from the grain heap, no hands or brooms should be used to collect all the grain, but only a wooden implement should be used to gather the scattered grain. Collection of jowar from these two sources constitute *Susaya* payment for seasonal services. The quantity of grain obtained in *susaya* payment is usually much larger than the *Kattaya*.

Both *Susaya* and *Kattaya* are bound up with definite terms of relationships regarding service and payment. Once the task is

over the Madiga client and members of his family are free to seek work elsewhere. Hereditary services do not imply 'jeeta' or 'bound labour'. For the rest of the year the Madiga client is at liberty to hire himself out as agricultural labourer.

In Kshetra *Kattaya* is largely falling into disuse. The agriculturists resent giving large quantities (80) seers of grain, when the price of jowar is quite high, especially for crudely finished 3-4 leather articles. While good quality leather articles are available at cheaper rate from nearby town markets. Thus the relationship is changing and a considerable number are dropping out.

These and similar considerations have brought about a vast number of changes in the hereditary relationship. C. G. Odathi, a Panchachara agriculturist's family Madiga client had pawned his hereditary rights to another Madiga for six years because he was indebted to him. C. G. Odathi could not object to this. Further in the village Panchayat Board elections of March 1960, the family Madiga client after taking 17 seers of jowar and money did not vote for C. G. Odathi. Enraged by this C. G. Odathi asked his Madiga client to keep away, literally break off from him till next elections to the Panchayat. The Madiga family was quite concerned about it. Although the Madiga client served C. G. Odathi, relationship was strained a great deal.

The Washerman's services in Kshetra also come under *Jajmani* relationships. The washerman of Kshetra (almost everywhere) do not serve the Untouchables. Also they claim that they do not accept cooked food from the Muslims and Pinjaris in Kshetra, although they might serve them. A washerman serves his patron both on normal and ritual occasions. For cleaning dirty clothes during the year he is annually paid 20seers of jowar. Every time cleaned clothes are returned the householder usually gives the Washerman a jowar *rotti* (dry pancake).

For ritual services rendered during birth, death, wedding or festival occasions washermen are paid separately both cash, food and grain, clothes and so forth. In the opinion of my informants, one thing or the other washermen keep begging the patron throughout the year and the payment is more rewarding compared to their services.

Not all caste Hindus and agriculturists avail the normal and ritual services of a washerman in Kshetra. Depending upon their conveniences they can receive his ritual services and make payment. Many families wash their linen themselves throughout the year. The nature and extent of washerman's services are thus essentially limited. Hence the necessity for washermen to take to other occupations as traditional service payment hardly meet their needs.

The services of the carpenter and blacksmith are available to all agriculturists including Untouchables in Kshetra. However, it should be noted that *Jajmani* relationship involving payment in kind is severely limited as indicated in Table-III. Many agriculturists paying cash for panchala services easily switch over from one Carpenter-Blacksmith to another. There is nothing very binding in this. It is left to one's choice and convenience.

The Carpenter, Blacksmith and Goldsmith in Kshetra do not constitute separate endogamous caste-groups. They all belong to the *Chikkamane* sub-caste and only seven families are engaged both in carpentry and smithy and work under traditional relationships.

Annually 30 seers of jowar are paid per plough (a pair of bullock) to the Carpenter for manufacture and repair of wooden implements used in cultivation by his agricultural patron. While only 20 seers are paid to the Blacksmith for his services.

Other ritual or normal services especially by a Carpenter such as supplying wooden dolls in a Lingayat wedding or manufacturing the wooden door frames or country carts, cash payment is made. In this way the panchalas supplement their family income. Further 3-4 panchala households in Kshetra have also learnt to manufacture tables and chairs. The skills thus acquired have also helped to supplement family income.

Turning to consider the services of Barber, in village India, these alone seems to be nearly universal and compulsory both on normal and ritual occasions. As it becomes clear from the table, a majority of households are served by the Barbers for payment in kind. While a negligible number are served for cash

payment. Barbers do not serve the Untouchables and the latter do not accept cooked food from the Barbers.

It seems to me, that the Barber-patron relationship is more binding on ritual occasions than for normal services. The following case illustrates this very well. A Kuruba patron had bad relationship with his barber client for nearly 2-3 years. The patron did not insist upon Barber's services and the Barber did not bother to know whether the patron shaved himself or by some other Barber or got shaved elsewhere. During early 1957 the patron, however, chose to celebrate his son's wedding without the ritual services of the family Barber. This was viewed seriously by the Barber. After the wedding, the Kuruba and Lingayat elders gathered at the instance of the Barber found the Kuruba patron guilty of having shaved himself in the absence of substitute barber's services, local or otherwise. This was considered by the Panchayatdars an offence, a serious breach of ritual relationship. The Panchayat levied a fine of Rs. 25/- on the Kuruba patron and made him admit his fault openly repentently by giving a betel-nut to the Barber.

The salient point that emerge from the above discussions of *Aya* or *Jajmani* system might be summarized thus :

1. The nature of services and payment are fixed. All services flow from one side, while the payment is made from the other side.
2. There is no economic determinism. *Aya* system cannot be described as giving and receiving gifts. Attributes of transactions or exchange of gifts are misleading.
3. There is functional unity in diversity. Economic and ritual roles are complementary and they emphasize the solidarity aspect of intercaste relationships more than *Dharma* and *Karma*. For non-payment of services is not considered as a failure inviting religious or other supernatural sanctions.
4. Agricultural economy and traditional relationships contain sufficient flexibility. It is unwarranted to import determinism and rigidity. Also superordination - subordination relationships generally obtain here. The agricultural patrons of upper-castes dominate the servicing castes both politically and juridically.

5. The principle of reciprocal relationship suggests a sense of equality. Since caste system by its very nature upholds graded inequality, the relationship between the patron and the client is rather complementary than based on principles of reciprocity.

6. The institution of *Hanneradu Ayagars*, upholds the social, economic, political and ritual interdependence of caste-groups. It emphasizes the principle of solidarity and essential-services self-sufficiency of the village community.

7. Growth of market economy, population, centralized and decentralized political organization have gone a long way to alter the situation and usher in changes.

8. The logic of *Jajmani* or *Aya* system has limitations. The scope of eternal binding relationship is limited. Subsistence agricultural economy gives an impetus for continued patron-client relationship leading to sentimental and kinship-like relationships.

9. *Jajmani* system is essentially a feature of rural life associated with unmechanized agricultural economy involving participation by a limited number of castes.

10. Functional interdependence based on unequal but complementary roles make the system somewhat enduring. In this the economic and the ritual roles are of utmost importance.

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1. Tawney, R. H., 1948, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 90.
 2. Tawney, R. H., 1948, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 26-27.
 3. Murthy, M.R.S., 1942, *Vachana Dharmasara*, p. 212.
 4. Weber, Max, 1930, *The Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism* p. 115.
 5. Weber, Max, 1930, *The Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism* p. 120.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS OF CASTE AND RELIGION IN ELECTIONS

Here I shall discuss Village Panchayat Board Elections in Kshetra held during March April 1960. Kshetra lies near the centre of the Kannada speaking area. The region in which the village lies is a predominantly Lingayat area and Lingayats form about half the population of the village. In Kshetra the inter-caste political relationships, particularly between the Kshatriyas and the Lingayats have been greatly influenced in recent years by elections even though the traditional authority and the leadership of the Kshatriyas continues.

While accounting for the success of the Kshatriyas and failure of the Lingayats I shall point out how there is a conflict between democracy based on adult franchise and 'traditional leadership' based on caste status, ritual position and wealth. The Kshatriyas, the traditional political leaders, have so far dominated Kshetra, because India is still largely a tradition-oriented society. Ownership of the village temple enables the Kshatriyas, as it becomes amply clear, to manipulate inter-caste political relationships. It is one of the vital elements in Kshatriya authority in the village. At the same time, the growing caste-consciousness among the Lingayats poses a threat to the traditional leadership of the Kshatriyas and given the processes of democracy, might succeed in upsetting it.

The village has a large Saivite temple which is also a regional cult centre. The 'Kshetra Linga' temple is endowed with six hundred odd acres of land, most of which is fertile, black cotton soil. Besides land, voluntary contributions from the pilgrims amount annually to several thousand rupees. A resident Kshatriya joint family controls the temple and its resources.

Disputes between the Kshatriyas and the Lingayats over the ownership of the temple and its resources have led each party to put forward different versions of the founding of the temple. The

account from each party supports its claims. As a matter of actual historical fact, however, the temple was founded by the ancestors, of the present Kshatriya family after the collapse of the Vijayanagar Empire in 1565.

Inter-caste political relationships in the village are very much influenced by the presence of the temple. The Kshatriyas have access to officials and the Government as the temple, which they manage comes under Government supervision. Official contacts have strengthened the position of the Kshatriyas in the village. They continue to enjoy dominance in the temple as well as in the statutory Panchayat. But the Lingayats who are economically and numerically dominant, have in the past, tried to assert their claims to the ownership of the temple, and in recent years, they are also trying to seize power in the statutory Panchayat.

A favourable court decision in the early 1920's reaffirmed the Kshatriya claim to the ownership of the temple. With this, the temple as a means of acquiring leadership has ceased to interest Lingayats. They are now more keen on securing political leadership.

The temple cult, insofar as it wields religious influence over the people, is one of the important agents for the continuance of Kshatriya political leadership. The role of the temple in village politics is overt. The disunity prevalent among the various Lingayat Sub-castes and caste-groups together with the role of the temple have paved the way for the continued political dominance of the Kshatriyas in the village. The Statutory Panchayat was introduced in Kshetra in 1949. Since, then the Presidentship of the Statutory Panchayat has been held by a Kshatriya elder.

Panchayat Boards

A Statutory administration has emerged with the creation of self-governing village Panchayat Boards. This has become increasingly important since India attained her independence. It is based on the democratic principle of election to office by a majority vote. The VPB¹ is headed by a President, who comes

1 Hereafter Village Panchayat Board will be referred to as VPB.

under the direct supervision of the Deputy commissioner. Also there is a vice-President and a certain number of members elected to office by the villagers and they assist the President in his work. The role of the Panchayat consists in working for the improvement of the village. It is a welfare body with some financial and judicial power. The VPB as a body represents the village in its dealings with the Government and the Government to the villagers.

With the introduction of statutory Panchayat, the Lingayats of Kshetra have become increasingly caste-conscious and Lingayat opposition to Kshatriyas has been increasing. In recent elections, a large number of Lingayat families voted against the Kshatriya President's Party. Elections have also contributed to the increase of differences among castes and individuals as the desire to capture power to promote individual and group ends become widespread.

The candidates running for offices-Presidentship and membership in the Statutory Panchayat do so for many reasons. It is prestigious to be a member, and a member has also power which he can use to build up a following. A clever member can also acquire land and house sites for himself from the Government. They get to know more people, especially officials and state-politicians, and this enhances their status. The members pay a nominal fee to run for offices, e.g. a caste Hindu must pay a deposit of Rs. 5/-, a woman Rs. 2/- and an Untouchable Rs. 2/- A member is not paid any salary but the membership provides him with opportunities to make money and extend his influence.

The Kshatriyas had always acted as arbitrators, although they did not occupy any position-either as Headmen or Accountants-in the 'traditional' Panchayat. The introduction of statutory Panchayats in 1949 paved the way for the institutionalized leadership in the village which the Kshatriyas now enjoy. The principle of election has helped to reduce the overt aggression-in connection with the temple which marked the relationship between the Lingayats and the Kshatriyas in the past. Caste antagonism based on religious differences i.e. Brahmanical and Sectarian dichotomy, between the Kshatriyas and the Lingayats finds its best expression during elections, While in fact, it is the

economic and political interests that widen these religious and caste-group cleavages between the Kshatriyas and the Lingayats.

In our discussion of village elections we shall concentrate on the role of the two dominant castes, i.e. the Kshatriyas and the Lingayat Panchachara. The inter-caste political behaviour, as was manifested in the village Panchayat Board elections, held during March-April 1960, throws light on the nature of the antagonism between these two groups. It also highlights the methods by which the two castes are trying to obtain influence, wield power and rally around them the villagers who are dependent on them for one thing or the other.

Villagers who supported the Kshatriyas were in some way dependent on them. They either cultivated temple land as tenants or held some ritual offices in the temple or devotees of the temple. Economic and ritual considerations prompted them to support the Kshatriyas. The temple administration is partly controlled by the Government and Government officials who visit Kshetra invariably come into contact with the Kshatriyas.

A Kshatriya elder held the Presidentship of the Statutory Panchayat for over a decade and during this period his contacts with the officials increased. The President used these connections to secure certain favours such as the grant of agricultural loans to individuals. The menials in the Panchayat Board, especially the Madiga sweepers, and a Maratha lamp lighter have also put themselves under the influence of the Kshatriyas. The lamp-lighter's job came to an end with the introduction of electricity in the village in February 1960. But he continued to work at his postman's job in the local post office.

The 'Lingayat Party' i.e. the Lingayats who formed the nucleus of the party opposed to that of the President, on the other hand, lacks the network of ties which bind the villagers to the Kshatriyas. The patron-client relationship was clearly not enough to make the lower castes support the Lingayats. Indeed, the Lingayats were divided amongst themselves, so that some of them did not hesitate to overlook caste and kinship ties and support the President's Party. The rift was not so much between the Kshatriya President and the Lingayat Party but the Lingayats

in the President's Party and the Lingayat Party formed during the elections.

The Lingayat Party as a whole was less strongly organised than the President's Party. It also lacked experience in the technique of conducting meetings in the village and seeking the support of the villagers. The discussion of the 'election drama' will account for the success of the Kshatriyas and failure of the Lingayats. Lack of unity, a significant feature among the Lingayats, has hindered their dominating village politics.

Although Lingayats as a whole constitute a single dominant caste-group in Kshetra it could be recalled that they actually constitute four different caste-groups. In addition to customary and occupational differences, they enforce strict sub-caste endogamy with restricted commensality between one subcaste and another. Thus cleavages run along the lines of castes and sub-castes.

Not a Homogeneous Group

The rapid growth of Veerasaivism since the time of Basava, has been due to mass conversion to Veerasaivism from other castes. Hence Lingayats do not constitute a homogeneous group. The distinctions such as following different occupations ; the Banajigas constituting mostly a trading community and Shivasimpigas working as Tailors, and other customary practices such as the presence of the clan system among the Sadaru and its absence among the Panchachara, probably owe their origin to diverse elements that have gone into it, especially as a result of recruiting people from other castes. The internal differences among the various Lingayat caste-groups have become crystalized. Even caste and sub-caste differences help us to mark off one caste-group from another ; and they partly explain the disunity prevalent among the Lingayats.

The sub-caste divisions are very real among the Lingayats. Sub-caste solidarity overrides Lingayat solidarity. Even more they seem to be opposed to Panchachara dominance. This leads them to join hands with Kshatriyas. Except for the Panchachara the other sub-castes are smaller in size, and show a greater deg-

ree of unity. While the large size of a single sub-caste like the Panchachara in Kshetra has tended to keep the members divided amongst themselves. Economic and political expediency or individual idiosyncracies have always come in the way of unity. Economic considerations can override loyalty to caste. The Banajiga traders from whom Kshatriyas buy their provisions have always supported the Kshatriyas and not the Lingayats. It could be argued that the dominance of the 'dominant' Lingayat caste in Kshetra is frequently negated by the existence of differing factions within it. Other features of Lingayat disunity will emerge below as I discuss the drama of the election, which also accounts for the continuance of Kshatriya tradition and authority in the village.

The elections of 1960* gave a major opportunity to the two dominant castes of Kshatriyas and Lingayats to mobilise their strength, by winning the support of people from the other castes in the village, who had aligned themselves with one or the other for the reasons given above. Each caste wanted to have a member elected to the village Panchayat Board, while some Lingayats wanted the Presidentship of the VPB to go to their caste. The Panchachara are the single largest subcaste, and are, on the whole, the most enterprising and industrious people in Kshetra. They are economically dominant. Among them are several boys studying in schools and colleges, which in due course will result in the emergence of a group of educated young men. The Lingayats failed to capture the Presidentship of the VPB in spite of the strong attempt which they made.

The antagonism between the Kshatriyas and the Lingayats was concentrated around the local temple for a long time. The income from endowed lands and voluntary contribution by pilgrims amounts annually to seven or eight thousand rupees. Lingayats envied the Kshatriya proprietorship of the temple because of economic interests. This has always been disguised

* The data on the elections was gathered by me after the elections were held. I was away from the village on some official assignment at the time of the election.

under the cloak of religious interests, the Veerasaivas claiming authority over the Saivite temple since they are exclusive worshippers of Shiva. Thus the Veerasaivas have put forth their claim to the ownership of the Kshetra Linga temple several times in the law courts since the middle of 19th century.

The persistent failure of the Lingayats to win a single lawsuit against the Kshatriyas with regard to the temple has forced them to accept the situation that they cannot derive any benefit from the temple economically or otherwise.

Similarly the success of the Kshatriyas in the lawsuits has strengthened their position. They believe that they won all the lawsuits because the deity has been on their side. They have identified themselves with the temple more strongly than before and they consider secular political leadership a gift bestowed on them by the deity. This faith is a living force. Hence the temple is still a very important agency through which the Kshatriyas are able to exploit the religious susceptibilities of people to win the election i.e. one of the reasons why people vote for the Kshatriyas is rooted in their faith in the deity.

During the 1960 elections religious elements openly entered the political arena. The Kshatriya President and his party made use of the name of the deity, while they canvassed and asked people to vote for them. Their election slogan consisted in shouting '*Elukoti*' (Seven Crores), which is the common way of invoking the deity.

The President and his party also induced a large number of villagers while Madigas were made to spend the night previous to the election day in the compound of President's house. They were given a meal by the President. The following morning, before they were allowed to proceed to the polling booth, the Madigas were smeared with the consecrated turmeric powder (*bhandar*) and made to swear in the name of the deity that they would vote for the president's Party. To what extent temple has acted-compelling Madiga voters - and is still acting as a powerful symbol emerges from this.

After the elections, the successful President expressed the view that the reason for the failure of the opposition Lingayat Party

was their caste-oriented campaign. In his opinion, the temple and the Kshatriyas stand for liberalism as opposed to caste conformity. His claim was probably conceded by many villagers, including especially members of 'lower' castes. But some of the latter overtly supported the Lingayats.

Move to Avoid Elections

Before receiving nominations for candidates in the elections in March 1960, the President and some of the retiring Lingayat members of the Panchayat Board (1957-60), toyed with the idea of nominating members to the Panchayat and sending a report to the Government to that effect. This move was made by those Lingayats who believed that elections were against the public interest as they were likely to increase factionalism and even break up families and old friendships. In Kshetra, nearly 60 per cent of the marriages (95 out of 159) among the Lingayat Panchachara are intra-village. If there were to be unanimous nominations, according to them, such nominees could be declared elected even under the Panchayat statutes. However, mutual distrust and ambition for power prevailed against the idea of nominating Panchayat members. The net result was that there were two parties which contested the elections.

One was the Kshatriya 'President's Party', while the opposition party was led by some Lingayats. The election procedure involved the whole village in the election of the members by the villagers and the President and the Vice-President from among themselves by the members. In April 1960, the President's Party won the elections in Kshetra. The Presidential election took place on June 19, 1960, when S.T. Dharmakarta and B. Banavi were returned uncontested as President and Vice-President. The Tahsildar conducted the General elections, while a special Revenue Inspector, an Untouchable, came from the taluk Head-

2 Kshetra was in Madras Presidency till 1953, & Madras Panchayat regulations continued to be in force till the 1960 elections. I continue to use the terms 'President' & 'Vice-President' accordingly, although the Mysore Panchayat regulations have substituted 'Chairman' & 'Vice Chairman'.

quarters to conduct the Presidential elections, Table 1A and 1B (p. 96-7) give the list of people who contested the 1960 elections.

From Table 1A, it is evident that all the Lingayat candidates from the President's Party are related to one another, and that most of them are also rich agriculturists and moneylenders. These rich Lingayats used their economic and moral power to persuade their tenants and debtors to vote and canvass for them. The network of ties which the rich had in the village and superior organizational powers contributed to the victory of the President's Party. The Kshatriyas also have many ties with the villagers. Kshatriya official contacts, their economic and political power, the favour which they dole out to people, above all the mystical belief and the fear that the deity will be enraged if they oppose the Kshatriyas ensure the support of the villagers.

Table of Candidates for the Kshetra Panchayat Board Election 1960
Table 1A : Successful President's Party

Name	Caste	Position	
1. S. T. Dharmakarta	Kshatriya	President	In his 50's, President of the VPB from 1949, has good reputation & influence and younger brother of the trustee of the Kshetra Linga Temple
2. B. Banavi	Lingayat Panchachara	Vice-President	In his 60's, continued in the office, rich agriculturist, business man and moneylender.
3. M. Tavare	„	Member	In his 50's, agriculturist, related to the Indi family (5 below).
4. N. Odathi	„	„	in his 30's, married to B. Banavi's daughter, agriculturists, moneylender and ritual leader (<i>Banakara</i>).

Name	Caste	Position	
5. S. Indi	Lingayat	Member	in his 40's, served on previous Panchayat Board, agriculturist, moneylender, owns a flour mill and related to B. Banavi.
6. B.G. Gowda	„	„	In his 50's agriculturist, his son a medical student married to B. Banavi's daughter.
7. D. Pagade	Kuruba	„	In his 40's, owns some land and works as a labourer.
8. K. Rami	Madiga	„	In his 30's, owns some land and works as a labourer.
9. Gopi	Talawari	„	In her 50's, a Basavi (has a Lingayat lover) agriculturist and well off.
10. Devi	Washer-woman		In her 40's, owns a small grocery shop, married but never lived with her husband. Now mistress of B. Banavi (2 above) a married man

Table 1B : Defeated Lingayat Party

1. T. Kanaja	Lingayat	In his 50's, served as a Panchayat Board member from 1949-53, agriculturist, owns a grocery shop and a hotel. A man of moderate means with a large family.
2. S. Kadale	„	In his 40's, prosperous agriculturist, twice P Board member from 1949-53, and 1957-60.

Name	Caste	Position
3. C.G .Odathi	Lingayat	In his 30's astute person, agricultu-
	Pancha- chara	rist, served as P Board Member from 1953-57.
4. M. Odathi	„	In his 50's agriculturist, a man of moderate means and talented puppet player.
5. M. Badige	„	A Congress man in his 50's agricul- turst, served as P. Board member during 1949-53, always supported the Kshatriyas but has now fallen out with the President.
6. M.Pathare	Panchala	In his 40's goldsmith, opened a grocery shop. Family has a bad reputation among Panchalas.
7. N.Kuntanna	Kuruba	In his 30's, rich agriculturist, a large joint Family. A member of the family had served as P. Board member during 1957-60.
8. E. Sonadi	Cheluvadi	In his 40's, a poor labourer, hardly lived in the village though skilled in house-building.
9. Padma	Lingayat Banajiga	A married woman in her 40's, left grownup sons and a daughter to live with Panchachara widower with a son and a daughter by his first wife.
10. Gowri	Maratha	A widow in her 40's, poor labourer and mistress of M. Badige, a widower (5 above).

Kshetra was divided into four wards with a total of 1,169 voters. In the first and second wards, there were twelve contestants with six from each party i.e. three for each ward. The third and fourth wards had eight contestants with four from each party i.e. two for each ward. In each ward the candidates from the Lingayat Party happened to secure both individually and totally less votes than their rivals. Whereas an average difference of twelve votes between two rival candidates was recorded in the first two wards, in the third and fourth wards the average rose to 57. Thus the Lingayat Party as a whole lost in the elections.

The Lingayat Party, on the other hand, lacked such a network of economic, political and religious ties with the people. In fact, none of them is a moneylender nor are there many who have leased land to tenants. They are mostly men of moderate means. No member from these families is studying in colleges as compared with the Lingayat members of the President's Party. They did not pool their resources to organize the Party. They also lacked experience. They were less aware of what was going on in 'closed circles' in the village. They made a few mistakes in the selection of candidates, and gave offence to the caste from which the candidates were chosen. Thus Panchalas, chose to vote for the President's Party.

It was T. Kanaja, M. Badige, S. Kadale (all three contested in the elections) and D. Angadi (a retiring Panchayat member) who formed the nucleus of the opposition party which I call 'The Lingayat Party'. The coming into existence of the Lingayat Party' was a symbol of the increasing Lingayat opposition to the traditional Kshatriya dominance in Kshetra.

The conflict between the Lingayats and the Kshatriyas for the control of the local temple dates back to the mid-19th century. Since then groups of Lingayats, especially sub-castes like the Banajiga and the Sadaru have almost always supported the Kshatriyas against the Panchachara Lingayats who were fighting for the control of the temple. Occasionally individual Lingayat families among the Panchachara and other sub-castes have also changed their allegiance and shifted it from one group to another as and when they found it expedient.

The increasing Lingayat opposition to Kshatriyas is an indication of increasing caste-consciousness among the former. They have come to know the numerical, economic and political importance of their caste at the State level, as Lingayats have provided political leaders since the formation of the new Mysore State in 1956. In Kshetra also Lingayats preponderate and they constitute easily the richest community here. Lack of unity among them, the Lingayats realise, is a stumbling block for the emergence of local Lingayat political leaders. Therefore some Lingayats in Kshetra are trying to bring about greater unity and solidarity among the Lingayats in general. Should they

succeed in this, they hope to assume political leadership in the village eventually.

The Lingayat Party owes its formation or birth to the ambitions of the present Vice-President, B. Banavi, to become President. The members of the Lingayat Party explained to me that they were led to agree to his proposal of contesting for membership, in particular for the Presidentship. Midnight meetings between B. Banavi and other Lingayats in the house of Lingayat schoolmaster had roused the feeling that a Lingayat Party would be formed to oppose the President's Party. But, as the nominations were given, B. Banavi left the Lingayat Party and joined the President's Party. The fact that B. Banavi let down the Lingayat Party, when it was getting ready to back him in the elections, compelled the Lingayat Party to make its own nominations. The Lingayat Party members felt that failure in the elections would be less humiliating than not contesting them at all.

Elections were held on the principle of giving representation to various castes in the village. The selection of candidates in each party, so I was told by a member of the Lingayat Party, followed a matching pattern i.e. the candidates put up by each party to contest against one another as far as possible were of equal reputation or they were equal to one another in some other respects.

The President's Party used its discretion in selecting people who were favourable to them and leaving others, even though a particular family had served on the Panchayat during previous years and a candidate from the same family was approved by the caste council for the 1960 elections. For instance, the late P. Kuntanna, a Kuruba elder, had served as a member in the previous Panchayat (1957-60). During the 1960 elections a younger member of the same family, N. Kuntanna, was approved by the Kuruba caste council. But the President suspected that the family was biased against his party. So he persuaded another Kuruba to join his party. Precisely for this reason, the Lingayat Party nominated N. Kuntanna as its candidate.

Democracy as understood by the villagers has helped to perpetuate and give a new role to caste in so far as it is consonant

with the principle that every numerically significant caste should be represented in the VPB. Further the constitution also guarantees representation to Harijans and women. These privileges have evoked a political-consciousness among the villagers.

The Kshatriya President of Kshetra was judicious in selecting a Madiga candidate for the 'reserved seat'. Here the Lingayat Party chose to nominate a Cheluvadi. The implications and effects of this particular nomination will be discussed later.

The Lingayat Party also nominated a Panchala without consulting the other Panchalas. The family in question had a bad reputation among Panchalas. The Lingayat nominee neither approached the people of his caste nor asked them to vote for him. This was considered by other Panchalas to be sheer arrogance on his part and they did not see what purpose would be served by electing him. The net result was that all the Panchalas - 14 households - voted for the President as he had helped them to get jobs in the local unit of the Electrical Department and had conferred other favours on them.

Woman Candidates

Although VPB administration came into existence in 1949, no provisions were made for electing women representatives. The Panchayat constituted after the elections of 1949, 1953 and 1957 consisted of a Harijan representative sitting along with elected caste-Hindu men. But the new Panchayat regulations of 1959 had laid down that two women should be elected. That women might become political leaders is still a novelty in villages. Normally the kitchen is the woman's domain, although sometimes women do work in the fields. By village standards (sex norms and code of modesty) only men can be political leaders and perform political roles. But according to Panchayat regulations each party was obliged to nominate women candidates. Despite the fact that no housewife was forthcoming, each party nominated its women candidates for the election.

The President's Party, chose a woman from the Talawari, non-lingayat caste. The Talawari woman Gopi happened to be one of the middle aged Basavis in Kshetra. The custom of dedicating a

woman to a deity, especially a female deity, goes by the name Basavi in this area. This is analogous to the institution of *Devadasi*. The dedicated woman normally does not get married, but takes lovers from the same caste, or an equivalent or higher caste. The president's Party also nominated Devi, a washerwoman, who though married, had never lived with her husband, but always took local lovers. At the time of the election B. Banavi, the Vice-President, was her lover.

The choice of women candidates from the Lingayat Party was similarly arranged. They chose Gowri, a Maratha widow, who had taken M. Badige for her lover, and Padma, a Banajiga woman, who had left her husband and grown-up children, to live with a Panchachara widower, who had a son and daughter by his first wife.

All the four women candidates have a bad reputation, Devi and Padma being more notorious than Gopi and Gowri. It was not that they had any qualifications for the Panchayat Board membership, but simply that the office was thrust upon them. Since they had a bad reputation as 'daring women' (*gandubeeri*). In contrast to housewives, they did not hesitate to accept the office. It implied that only the notorious would sit on village Panchayats with the men and talk to them. Yet the two women chosen here had no idea of what it meant to be a member of the Panchayat. In fact, in Kshetra, it is not membership of the Panchayat Board but its Presidentship that carries all prestige, status and responsibility of office.

The President, in addition to B. Banavi and S. Indi who had served in the previous Panchayat, nominated three more Lingayat Panchachara men to his party. However, all five are connected with one another through kinship and affinal ties (see Table-1A).

The Lingayat Party also included five Lingayats (see Table-1B). Friendship rather than kinship and affinal ties held them together. The kinship and affinal ties that obtained between members assumed secondary importance in the election. These friends shared the common objective that Lingayats should capture the Presidentship of the statutory Panchayat.

All the ten Lingayat candidates involved in the election had

direct and indirect affinal and kinship connections with each other. Political affiliations cut across ties of caste and kinship. Therefore, I shall not give an elaborate geneology to demonstrate the links. Caste and kinship ties did not unite them against the Kshatriyas. Part of this disunity and rivalry could be linked with bad relations among kinsmen. Further, ambition and the desire for personal economic benefits and such other self-interests weighed heavily in the election.

Most of the political leaders, especially at village level, exploit caste ties for their own interest in elections. Caste affiliations are easily understood by the people. It is the villagers' way of life. In Kshetra, the ambitious Vice-President conferred with his fellow-Lingayat leaders and tried to exploit caste ties to his own advantage i.e. to become the President of the VPB. But before the Lingayats would form a party opposed to that of the Presidents' Party, he defected and joined the latter's group. The conduct of the vice-President humiliated the other lingayat leaders and they were determined to form an opposition party and they did so.

The members of the Lingayat Party who wanted to safeguard Lingayat interests could not succeed because political affiliations cut across the ties of caste and kinship. This made it possible for individuals and parties to participate in the election drama in a random manner. In fact, one party of Lingayats were shrewed enough to join the President's Party where the chances of winning the election were greater. Looked at from this angle, the election could be seen as a struggle for power within the Lingayat community. One group of Lingayats put self-interest above the solidarity of caste, while the other group saw greater advantage in securing group-interest (caste), to 'curb' the Kshatriya power.

No Inter-Personal Tensions

Party rivalry did not lead to severe inter-personal tensions in Kshetra during the elections. Yet antagonism did arise between groups of participants to such an extent that some ill-feeling persisted, particularly among the Lingayats after the elections. An unsuccessful candidate of the Lingayat Party viewed the situation seriously and severed his ties with his kinsmen, his

domestic priest, and his Untouchable servant's family, because they did not vote for him. However, all my informants, both the defeated Lingayat leaders and the successful Kshatriya President, assured me that these ruptured relations were only a temporary phase and would not lead to the formation of hostile factions in Kshetra, as had happened in Kolalu, a neighbouring village. In fact, after the elections, Lingayat elders tried to patch up the ruptured social ties among Lingayats and most of the disgruntled were pacified.

Individuals and groups who participated in the elections canvassed among the villagers pointing out the good and the bad; the good they were capable of doing to the people if they were elected to the office; and the harm their opponents might do if they were elected. The election symbols (see below) used by the parties and the methods of canvassing led to a somewhat sharp structuring of parties. Each party tried to abuse the election symbols of the other party, while the members of the President's Party gave almost a 'cynical' interpretation of the election symbols used by the Lingayat Party. Still the two parties did not clash and there was no breach of peace in the village. But elections helped to shape the social events—a wedding and a tea party—that immediately followed.

Both the Lingayats and the Kshatriyas are aware of the cleavages between them. They belong to two different religious—Sectarian and Brahmanical—groups, with divergent practices. Until recently, these religious differences have often been expressed by groups of Lingayats while asserting their rights over the Kshatriya owned Saivite temple, the resources of which are also controlled by the Kshatriyas.

The Lingayats were never united even while fighting the Kshatriyas for the ownership of the temple. The size of the caste in relation to the total population, and the size of the Panchachara in relation to the Kshatriyas contrasts favourably. It is an accepted fact that lack of unity among the heterogeneous group of Lingayats accounts for the success of the Kshatriyas who constitute a homogeneous group. Further a view held by most Lingayats is that because of the VPB Presidentship, the interests of the Kshatriya community are more secure than

theirs. The increased contact between the President and Government officials has led the Lingayats to believe that the Kshatriyas are dominant with or without Lingayat support.

But it looks as though the Kshatriya President needs Lingayat support to remain in office. All people in politics have 'self-interests' and it is one of the strong motives which prompts some Lingayats to join the President's Party against the Lingayat Party. The President, by judicious distribution of membership of VPB among the Lingayats, hinders their unity on a caste basis and simultaneously makes his position secure.

The working of the VPB, however, has not led the Kshatriyas and Lingayats to develop identical interests. So long as the President remains in office, he maintains his dominant position and the Lingayat members in his party accept his dominance. It is only in this way, i.e. by accepting the dominance of the President that the Lingayat members can realise their self-interests, for instance, taking the temple lands on lease for cultivation, or getting agricultural loans or getting a dispute settled in their favour.

The Kshatriyas do recognize that self-interest motivates much of the Lingayat support. They do not trust the loyalty of their Lingayat supporters very much. They also envisage the possibility that in certain circumstances all Lingayats would unite to oppose the Kshatriya interests, if the need arose. Therefore, the President takes every precaution to accept only certain Lingayats and not others into his party.

New Caste Consciousness

Those Lingayats who are opposed to Kshatriya leadership are striving to unite the Lingayat community, so that they would be able to dominate the village politically. They have not succeeded so far, but they entertain hopes of success in the future. This hope is based on an increase in the number of their supports in the village. Whereas at the turn of the 20th century only a couple of Lingayat families were opposed to the Kshatriyas (mainly for temple proprietorship), today there are about 54 Lingayat households which openly support the Lingayat Party. In addition, a Brahmin, a Kshatriya and a Panchala household,

a few Kurubas, Barikas, Talawaris and all the four Cheluvadi Untouchable households, in all about 30 percent of the population, openly support the Lingayat Party.

A total of 90 households in the village support the Lingayat Party. The difference between the total number of households which support the President's Party and those that support the Lingayat Party is vast and leaves a large gap. Still the increasing support that the Lingayat Party is gaining in the village gives them the hope that one day they will be able to capture the Presidentship. It is a conviction of the Lingayats that failures are stepping stones to success and that future generations of Lingayats will be benefitted by the present failures.

The temple is a stumbling block to the success of the Lingayats. The majority of non-Lingayats such as the Kurubas, the Marathas and the Untouchables, especially the Madigas, support the President's Party on religious and economic grounds. Kshetra Linga is the family deity of majority of households in the village. This provides a basis which links the village people and the Kshatriyas who own the temple and also supervise the cult. Major ceremonies in the temple are centred around agricultural rites. People in general, and agriculturists in particular, believe in the efficacy of these rituals and therefore participate in the celebrations. To this extent the Kshatriyas do get the villagers' co-operation and support. Further, every Kuruba and Maratha households has a *Gorava* (persons who dedicate themselves to the Kshetra Linga and go about begging in the name of the deity), which is economically rewarding to them. They have supported the Kshatriyas all these years probably for this reason. They can only oppose the Kshatriyas at the risk of endangering their own economic interests.

Lingayats and Madigas

The Madigas have supported the Kshatriyas for different reasons. The statutory Panchayat has appointed two Madiga sweepers under the VPB. This is in addition to the two Madigas who are serving under the village Headman and Accountant. The President has assisted Madigas to get house-building grants

and even some land for cultivation from the Government. They have therefore, been drawn more and more towards the Kshatriyas in recent years. This is one of the reasons why the hereditary relationship (*Kattaya*) between Madigas and Lingayat agricultural patrons is falling into disuse. In addition to this the religious susceptibilities of the lower castes are exploited, as indicated earlier. The two pressures—economic obligations and religious exploitation—were brought to bear upon the Madigas by the President's Party; hence they failed to support the Lingayat Party.

The Lingayat Party had put up a Cheluvadi candidate to contest the 'reserved' seat'. The Madigas objected to this. The Lingayat Party tried to pacify the Madigas on the ground that a chance should be given to another Untouchable caste, as the Madigas had served on the Panchayat since 1949. Since the Lingayats had set up a candidate from a caste opposed to and alleged to be lower in status than theirs, the Madigas were unwilling to support the Lingayat Party.

The Madigas being numerous, and having 86 votes advanced the view that they could ill afford to lose a seat in the Panchayat to their rivals, the Cheluvadis. They argued that if the Lingayat Party had put forward another Madiga candidate, instead of a Cheluvadi, they would have divided their votes between the two and supported both the parties.

It was too late to withdraw their candidature. So the Lingayats pleaded that the Madigas could still divide and give half of their votes to the Lingayat Party excluding the Cheluvadi candidate. The Madigas seemed to agree to this. The choice of a Cheluvadi candidate from the Lingayat Party was an inept move as there is much dispute between Madigas and Cheluvadis on relative status in the caste system. In Kshetra, there are more Madigas than Cheluvadis and the former freely gave vent to caste antagonism in the election.

Initially, both the President's Party and the Lingayat Party tried to win over the Madigas. Of the 28 *Basavis* in Kshetra no less than 16 are Madigas. The Institution of *Başavi* has been declared illegal by both the Mysore and the Madras Governments

The Madras Devadasi (Prevention of Dedication) Act XXXI, 1947, was in force in Kshetra as it was in Madras till 1953. The Mysore Government is also taking severe measures against the *Basavis* because they are prostitutes. When I was collecting census data, after giving me details, the Madigas suspected that I might be a Government agent who would report adversely to the Government about the Madiga *Basavis* and do them some harm. This fear of the Madigas was exploited by both the parties before the elections. Both the parties told the Madigas that they had intervened and stopped the Ethnographer from sending a report to the Government.

The Madigas had stronger motive for supporting the President's Party than the Lingayat Party. The Government Rest House where I was put up belongs to the Panchayat Board and it is under the control of the President. Since the President had obliged me by giving me accommodation there, the Madigas inferred that I must have obliged the President by not sending a report against the Madiga *Basavis* to Government. Although they had seen me in the company of the Lingayat Party members, they did not believe that Lingayats could influence me to the extent of preventing me from reporting to the Government unfavourably about the Madiga *Basavis*.

When the Madigas agreed to divide their votes between the two parties, they started begging for money, grain and other donations from the Lingayat Party. They commented that the President's Party was spending money freely among the voters and entertaining them to attract and meat. If the Lingayat Party wanted to win, they should also feed people along the same lines as the President's Party and not give them 'mere snacks and tea'.

Individual Lingayat candidates gave both liquor-money and grain to Madiga voters. One of my Lingayat informants told me that he gave Rs. 17 and 15 seers of jowar to one Madiga family, besides several small sums of cash and grain given to others. But the President's Party persuaded all the Madigas to stay in the President's compound on the night prior to the

election and fed them³. This led to the President's Party bagging the Madiga votes.

Earlier, the Lingayat Party had successfully petitioned the Government against the President's proposal to convert his compound into one of the polling booths. The Lingayats took precautions because they believed that people going to vote in a corner of the President's private house might be afraid of casting their votes in favour of Lingayats. Accordingly the Tahsildar inspected the spot and appointed the Rest House and the village Common hall (*chavadi*) as polling booths. The way in which the President used his compound after the Government had turned down the proposal to convert it into a polling booth, was a fine tactic and it took the Lingayats completely by surprise.

After the elections, the Madigas as a whole were ill-at-ease with the Lingayats. Some of the defeated Lingayat members wanted to teach the Madigas a lesson by reporting to the Government against the *Basavis*. They even suggested that I should do it for them. For some time the Madigas were afraid of encountering me in the company of the defeated Lingayat Party members. This became apparent when they began to avoid me and were unwilling to give me any information about themselves. It was not until the President assured them that there was no harm in giving genealogical information that the Madigas consented to dictate their genealogies.

One of the Lingayat informants told me that he had severed his hereditary ties with Madiga family who failed to vote for him after accepting so much money and grain. He told the client that he should keep away from him until the next elections. The Madiga family showed concern over this. The same Lingayat informant severed his ritual ties with a Jangam domestic priest's family, the members of which had violated their promise to divide their votes between the two Lingayat disciples standing for election as candidates of the rival parties. He also severed

3. Opler, M. E. 1959, "Tradition and Change in a Local Election", in *Leadership and Political Institutions in India*, (Ed) Park & Tinker, pp 137-50. Opler has recorded similar incidents in an election held in U. P. villages during Dec. 55

his kinship ties with one of his classificatory father's-in-law who refused to divide the family votes between a friend and a relative who represented opposite parties. Instead he favoured the 'friend', because he is one of the richest and biggest landowners in the village and wields much power and influence. Politico-economic interests cut across kinship ties, and hence the family supported a rich and influential man against a poor relative.

Election Symbols

The ballot is in theory secret. The idea of dividing family votes and caste votes between the two parties aimed at securing as many votes as possible for each party. The Lingayat Party members started with a bargain of this kind, yet the outcome was unfavourable to the Lingayat Party. The evidence at my disposal suggests that nowhere did the voters voluntarily agree to divide either the family or caste votes between the two parties with the intention of keeping good relationship with both. They were invariably cajoled by members of the Lingayat Party.

The Lingayat Party members asked the Madigas to divide their caste votes between the President's and Lingayat Parties. Had the Madigas acted according to their promise, 43 of them would have gone with a member of the Lingayat Party to the polling booth. The voters enter the booth while the candidate waits outside. But once the voters are inside the booth, they are at liberty to change their minds and vote for anyone instead of the promised candidate. There is no way of knowing, except the given word. The Lingayat Party members similarly asked the Panchalas to divide their caste votes between the two parties. In the election tension and competition were increased as a result of this.

The Lingayat Party made use of one the favourite parables of Vinoba Bhave when it canvassed in the village and asked people to vote for it. The parable is this: "There was a very poor man in a certain village. He begged the landowners to lease him two acres of land for cultivation. Most of the village landlords turned him down. One landlord took pity on him in the end and gave him two acres of poor soil. The poor man devoted himself to cultivation and was able to raise good crops. This opened the

eyes of the other landlords in the village. So the following year people rushed to lease their land to the poor man." Likewise, "we are poor and inexperienced. Elect us to office, give us a chance to serve and see what we can do for you. We are not the rich elephant-and-horse-owners, but the poor living in grass huts". The 'elephant' and the 'horse' were among the symbols of the President's Party.

The President's Party had an elephant, a horse, a cow and a flower for its symbols. Whereas the Lingayat Party had a cart wheel, an umbrella, an open hand and a pair of scales. The reference to party symbols made by the Lingayat Party while narrating the parable angered the President's Party. It interpreted the symbolism literally, and so abused the symbols of the Lingayat Party.

The President's Party derided the Lingayat Party symbols. It said that they stood for : a broken cart wheel (*Muruku chakra*) a torn umbrella (*haruku kode*), a hand infected with leucoderma (*tonnugai*), and a scale which could be turned upside down (*tajiviji-takkadi*), implying that business people are swindlers. 'Swindling, in fact, is the trader's art.'⁴

In contrast, the elephant, horse and cow were animals of substantial value which could be owned only by people of substantial wealth. The value of the objects was equated with a man of means. A man with means was assumed to have a weighty personality, commanding prestige. The value of an umbrella or a pair of scales is very little compared to that of an elephant or a cow. Hence the prestige of people with only an umbrella or a pair of scales is correspondingly low.

The cow is not merely a sacred animal in India but is regarded as *Gomata* (cow, the mother), the source of supply of bullock power. India is a predominantly agricultural country where bullocks are used to draw the plough. The cow and bullock are looked upon as saviours of mankind. Nothing captures the imagination of the villagers so much as a cow or a pair of bullocks, both of which are venerated. A cow, as a pair of bullocks as election symbols were ideologically nearer to the

4. Bailey, F. G. 1957, "Caste and the Economic Frontier", p.135.

common viewpoint than the symbols of the other party.

Earning a living by business—through the use of scales—make a peasant suspect that one needs to tell lies and handle the scales skillfully to deceive customers. Hence business is not for honest people. To put it another way, honest people never prosper in business. The symbol of scales used by the Lingayat Party undoubtedly failed to impress the people. The symbols that the parties used in the election undoubtedly influenced the result of the election, for they were evaluated within a traditional frame of reference.

The elephant, horse, cow and flower-President's Party symbols—all have traditional value and could be linked with high caste-status. The elephant and horse stand for power, while the Kshatriyas constitute a traditionally ruling and warrior caste. The cow and flower are sacred objects in Hinduism. The cow is variously described as *Gomata* and *Kamadhenu* (giver of all things desired by men) and it is worshipped by all high caste Hindus including the Veerasaivas. Flowers have a ritual value and they are indispensable on all religious occasions,

The cart wheel, umbrella, open hand, and scales, the symbols of the Lingayat Party do not carry implications of traditional value. The cart wheel is connected with agriculturists and it is associated with a less-well-to-do caste status. The umbrella which protects one from sun and rain is not necessarily a symbol of richness either. An open hand as interpreted by one of my informants may stand for righteousness (*dharmadakai*). It may equally mean a begging or a hand stretched to receive alms from others. The scales stand for justice and fair dealing as much as they are associated with swindling in business.*

I am unable to explain on what grounds the party symbols were chosen in Kshetra. But what emerges is that the President's Party seem to have calculated on appealing to traditional values in much the same way as the Indian Congress Party does at a higher level. Neither the President nor any members of his party are members of the Congress. The local parties do not identify

* Professor Srinivas tells me that scales are an old caste symbol of the Cheluvadis insofar as the representation of the scales are found on the caste-ladle carried by them.

themselves with political parties at higher levels such as the Congress or the Praja Socialist Party. They do not have a body of rules or programme as the State political parties have. This is evident from the Taluk Board elections held in October 1960, and the General elections held during February 1962. In the Taluk Board elections a Lingayat Congress candidate was elected, while in the General elections a Lingayat candidate of the Praja Socialist Party was elected. This also indicates the growing caste-consciousness among people in general in recent years. Identification is by caste membership rather than by faith in party principles.

The symbols used by the Lingayat Party in a sense stood for a new set of economic values. In fact this might be conceived as a logical development of Veerasaiva philosophy which advocated a vocation as very essential to earning a living. The Lingayat Party did not succeed against the President's Party partly because of the conflict between traditional values and emergent economic and political ideas of democracy. India is a tradition-oriented society and tradition has a strong hold over the minds of men. Appealing in the name of deity and symbols like a cow or a pair of bullocks have traditional values and people could understand them very easily. But the use of a pair of scales as symbols failed to impress the people.

Fissures Among Lingayats

I cite the following few instances to show how the result of the election left more evident traces on relationships among Lingayats themselves than on those between Lingayats and Kshatriyas.⁵ Members of Lingayat family divided their votes between the two candidates contesting on behalf of different parties. They preferred one party to another for various reasons. After the elections, the wives of the successful Lingayat contestants

5. One possible explanation is that the members of a sub-caste resident in a village generally come together when a wedding, funeral, birth or festival occurs. Such occasions calling for close cooperation and interaction promote solidarity as well as conflict. Such close bonds do not exist, however between two different sub-castes or castes such as the Lingayats and Kshatriyas in Kshetra.

i.e. from the President's Party, taunted and abused the unsuccessful Lingayat men who had opposed their husbands. Also the teachers in the local school, who were all Veerasaivas, and who otherwise were sympathisers of the Lingayat Party, were abused, mocked at, subjected to the threat that members in office would see to their immediate transfer from Kshetra.⁶

The antagonism between the successful and defeated Lingayat leaders was nowhere displayed more clearly than at a wedding during May 1960, just one month after the elections in the village X, a Lingayat youth in his 20's was compelled by his elders and some of the newly-elected Lingayat members, to marry his five-year-old niece at the time of the wedding of his elder brother. Kshatriya youths advised X in my presence that it was illegal and very risky from a personal viewpoint, and they persuaded X to give it up. This was immediately concluded by X's family to be connected with the Lingayat Party. As they had supported the President's Party during the elections, they thought that the Lingayat Party was contriving to harm them in some manner.

Among Lingayats, the ritual leader of the group (*Banakara*) must give his formal consent to the settlement and celebration of a wedding. Here the *Banakara* was a successful candidate in the recent elections. Hence he readily agreed. When X told his elders and people interested in this wedding that he had been advised against it, people took sides along political lines. They were determined to celebrate the marriage to offer a challenge to the Lingayat Party.

It so happened that members of the Lingayat Party had gathered for a tea party given by a Barike youth who had got married early in April 1960. X's mother took it amiss, and accused them of having gathered there to write a petition to the Government. It was news to the members of the Lingayat Party. The Vice-President and the *Banakara* (B. Banavi and N. Odathi), who were also father-in-law and son-in-law, loudly announced that they would see what others in the village could do. They financed

6. At the time of the VPB election all the six teachers were away on election duty in other villages.

the wedding and they were the real leaders in the affair. Yet when I put this matter before the VPB President, he denied that there were party pressures involved.

The President also inveighed against the 'Sarda Act', which prohibits child marriage. The Sarda Act passed well over three decades ago by the Government-Madras then constituted part of British India, while Kshetra was in Madras Presidency till 1953—is still disregarded by the villagers in the Presidency. It prohibits the marriage of girls and boys below the age of 14 and 18 respectively. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 has raised the marriageable age of girls to 15 years.

In the words of the President, "As all people should encourage a good thing like celebrating a wedding at any cost, why should anyone complain to the Government? If out of enmity someone is prepared to give the information, the Act does not encourage the informer. A man lodging the information has to pay a deposit of Rs. 100. He will get back his deposit only if the case is proved. But in most cases it happens that they are disproved. Hence even a man's enemies would be reluctant to take advantage of the Act". Thus the President lectured on the ineffectiveness of many Acts in the lives of the villagers.

The tea party arranged by the Barike youth, unfolded yet another aspect of the bad relations prevailing among the Lingayats themselves. Y, a Lingayat, now a college student, and a consistent supporter of the President's Party, came and told the Kshatriya youths almost in a complaining tone, "look, N. Kalli had arranged 'a tea party' in honour of people of the Lingayat Party. I walked three or four times in front of his house. N. Kalli did not even cast a glance at me, nor said 'hallo' to me. We all worked on his behalf during his wedding but today he is 'giving a grand party' to others".

N. Kalli is a popular tailor, has a small cloth shop, with customers among all castes. His marriage took place in April when the election campaign in the village had divided the people against one another. Some of the Lingayat members of the President's Party volunteered to help and work on behalf of N. Kalli during the wedding when extra hands were needed for various activities. Members of the President's Party who had helped

N. Kalli were all fed at the wedding feast. N. Kalli was wise enough to give tea exclusively to the members of the Lingayat Party, to reaffirm the fact that he was still their supporter and that he needed them. This case was outlined to me by a local teacher.

Shifting Alliances

Before the elections took place in April, B. Banavi saw that the services of H, a temporary part-time clerk in the VPB were dispensed with. B. Banavi who joined the President's Party suspected H of giving the election information regarding the plans and programmes of the President's Party to the Lingayat Party. Therefore he urged the President to remove him from office. H, a Lingayat from a neighbouring township, had been absent from Kshetra for a long time owing to ill-health. When he returned to Kshetra during February 1960, he became a boarder in T. Kanaja's hotel. This link was considered undesirable enough. In addition, outside the office hours H was constantly seen in the company of Lingayat Party members. This gave rise to suspicion and allegation to the effect of passing on election information to the Lingayat Party. H, was dismissed from service in April, I suspect they probably mentioned his long absence and prolonged illness in the order of dismissal.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, many Lingayat youths, and the son of the Vice-President of the VPB, now a college student, often used to emphasize the need for a change of political leadership as of great importance. Credit for all village improvements, such as getting electricity, a Rest House, a Post Office, and grant for a school building, was given exclusively to the Government, and not at all to the President, who had worked hard and ably to get them sanctioned. Yet the same youth, like his father, changed his opinion and shifted his allegiance to the President's Party during the elections. He was one of the most important leaders canvassing for the party. 'This is politics (rajakeeyave hege)' was his reply to the members of the Lingayat Party who reminded him of his past criticisms of the President. His father continued as Vice-President for the second time.

The salient features that emerge from the above discussions are:

1. The internal 'divisions' among the Lingayats buttress and perpetuate the traditional authority of the Kshatriyas.
2. Ownership of the temple enables the Kshatriyas to manipulate inter-caste political relationships and it is one of the strengths of Kshatriya authority in the village.
3. The Kshatriyas, traditionally known for their political roles, have so far managed to dominate the village. This is made possible since India is still largely a tradition-oriented society.
4. The increasing caste-consciousness among the Lingayats of Kshetra might undermine the traditional authority of the Kshatriyas.
5. There is a conflict between democracy, based on numerical majority in post-independence India, and traditional dominance, based on caste status, ritual position and wealth.

CHAPTER—VII

THE POLITICS OF ECONOMICS : LANDHOLDING & POWER—RELATIONS

Here I propose to outline and discuss the landholding pattern as it affects power relations between the Kshatriyas and Lingayats, in particular the Panchachara Lingayat sub—caste, in Kshetra. The landholding (as illustrated in the map), highlights several points, which are pertinent for discussion here. A glance at the map will show the reader how land is segmented, divided and sub-divided, so that in some cases it is rendered into fragments which are uneconomic to cultivate. Such uneconomic holdings are liabilities to their holders. The agricultural economy is adversely affected by such tiny holdings.

Nature of Agricultural Economy

Since it is intended to analyse and discuss the power relations among different caste—groups in the village, the ownership of land is taken to be one of the best variables, which among others affects and to some extent regulates intercaste, intra—caste and inter—personal relationships. A subsistence agricultural economy constitutes the main source of income of Indian rural people. It can be argued that in its operation Indian agriculture necessitates close interdependence among several people. The agriculturist is drawn into a network of relationships with a number of servicing castes such as the carpenter, blacksmith, barber, potter, washerman and untouchable labourers, all of whom enjoy a minimum degree of economic security. In other words agriculture promotes 'organic solidarity' among a number of people.

An agricultural economy as it has functioned traditionally is characterized by the smooth working imbued by a 'team spirit'. Thus it promotes economic security, orders human relationships, emphasizes mutual interdependence, cooperation and so forth. Nevertheless misunderstandings occasionally arise between the agricultural patrons and their clients, so that these relationships

are also marked by tension. The agricultural patron is usually in a dominant position, while the clients have a sense of dependence on and subordination to the patron. This encourages the agriculturist to be assertive.

Land-ownership and Status

In village India the ownership of land is of primary importance. It confers prestige and status. Given the choice an average Indian farmer would like to invest his savings in land. Unlike business, agriculture ensures security because of steady returns. A farmer is thus attached to his land and he is always on the look out to add to his holdings rather than to sell his land. This, however, does not imply that land does not change hands.

Land comes into the market for several reasons, Land might be sold to meet the expenses of weddings, funerals, education, or feasts and festivals. Death of plough cattle or purchase of plough cattle may necessitate the sale of land. Absence of male members or occasional migration to other places or misfortunes might bring about sale of land. When land is fragmented and therefore uneconomic to operate, it might come into the market. The causes outlined above may operate singly or in combination of several kinds, so as to compel a person to dispose off his land. This, however, is only a last resort. The sentiments attached to land, especially ancestral land, and a sense of security and prestige weigh very heavily against frequent sale of land.

Landownership confers prestige and status on the owner and also puts him in a network of relationships where he can dominate. In short, political or power relationships develop between farmers and others. The greater the holding, the greater is the prestige a person enjoys and generally his words carry weight and he remains powerful. But landholding also serves to increase competition among potential equals and more so when the available land is limited and does not come into the market frequently. It is the scarcity of land and the value attached to land ownership that increases the tension and leads to disputes between the Kshatriya and Lingayat caste-groups in Kshetra.

In the present context I shall be mainly concerned with this aspect of study.

Kshetra : Introductory

Kshetra as already indicated lies in the centre of the Kannada-speaking area and has formed part of Mysore State since 1953. Before 1953 it was in Madras State. Kshetra together with Ambralli and Tanda constitute one administrative unit. Ambralli and Tanda are at a distance of 3 and 3½ miles respectively to the North East of Kshetra. These hamlets have one common Headman (*Patel*), while Kshetra has its own Headman. An Accountant (*Shanubhog*), resident in Kshetra maintains all the land and crop records and makes revenue assessments for all the three settlements.

For purposes of this study I concentrate on Kshetra and whatever details of the two hamlets appear, are only of marginal importance. The only cooperative society of the administrative unit functioning from the 1920's in Kshetra also serves the people of the hamlets. The Panchayat elections of 1960 further strengthened the bond between the hamlets and Kshetra. The hamlets elected three representatives—two from Ambralli and one from Tanda—to work hand in hand with the Kshetra Panchayat Board. However, it is expected that Kshetra with its 10 elected members—including the village Panchayat Board President, Vice-President, two women and one scheduled caste person—will play a leading role in the group Panchayat of the administrative unit.

With the exception of the above factors, the social, religious and other aspects of life do not bring Kshetra and the hamlets closer together. Although the hamlets constitute the administrative satellites of Kshetra, they function fairly independently of Kshetra, especially in terms of political and juridical relationships. Disputes from the hamlets are seldom brought to Kshetra, but are settled locally by the elders. The following table give details regarding the caste composition, household and landholding in Kshetra and the two hamlets. These details were part of census data collected during 1960.

Table 1 Details of Caste Composition, Population and Landholding in Kshetra

Caste Groups	House-holds	Men	Women	Total Population	Landholding		Average Land holding per
					Acres	Cents	
1. Lingayat	133	371	363	734	38.0	1405.43	1.91
Panchachara							
A. "Banajiga	16	42	31	73	3.8	86.00	1.18
B. "Sadaru	8	16	22	38	2.0	47.00	1.24
C. "Sivasimpiga	4	22	13	35	1.8	32.00	0.91
D. "Handerahuta	1	2	3	5	0.3	00.00	0.00
2. Lingayat Potter	1	3	2	5	0.3	2.00	0.40
3. Lingayat Barber	2	9	6	15	0.8	0.00	0.00
4. Jangam	6	16	11	27	1.3	14.00	0.52
5. Kuruba	57	131	150	281	14.6	334.50	1.19
6. Maratha	13	35	34	69	3.6	28.00	0.41
7. Barike	19	54	47	101	5.2	74.05	0.73
8. Sethi Banajiga	3	11	6	17	0.9	16.00	0.94
9. Pinjari	4	15	13	28	1.4	37.00	1.52
10. Muslim	3	7	6	13	0.7	0.00	0.00
11. Talawari	13	53	51	104	5.4	49.37	0.47
12. Agasa	9	17	23	40	2.1	4.00	0.10
13. Brahmin	4	10	8	18	0.9	59.00	3.28
14. Kshatriya	9	40	23	63	3.3	162.50	2.58
15. Panchala	14	36	40	76	4.3	44.34	0.58
16. Cheluvadi	4	10	8	18	0.9	6.00	0.33
17. Kanchaveera	7	10	12	22	1.1	22.00	1.00
18. Madiga	28	70	77	147	7.6	8.25	0.06
Total	358	980	949	1929	100.0	2431.44	

Note : Land shown as owned by the Kshatriyas forms part of the Kshetra Linga temple inam land totalling 662 acres and 26 cents.

Table II Details of Caste Composition, Population and Landholding in Ambralli and Tanda

Caste-Groups	Households	Population		Total Population	Land Holding		Average land-holding per	
		Men	Women		Ac.	Ct.	Household	Person
1. Kuruba	11	28	28	56	170.00		15.45	3.04
2. Talawari	3	7	7	16	28.00		9.33	1.75
3. Pinjari	5	7	5	12	6.00		2.00	0.50
4. Yadava	2	5	6	11	59.00		29.50	5.36
5. Brahmin	1	3	3	6	35.00		35.00	5.83
6. Lingayat Panchachara	1	1	2	3	2.00		2.00	0.67
7. Lingayat Sadaru	1	3	3	6	10.00		10.00	1.67
8. Panchala	1	2	1	3	0.00		0.00	0.00
9. Odda	1	3	9	5	0.00		0.00	0.00
10. Lambadi	40	111	105	216	188.50		4.71	8.73
Total	64	172	162	334	498.50			

From Tables I and II, it can be seen that out of the total assessed dry cultivable land (3573 acres and 49 cents) as much as 3429 acres and 70 cents (including 662 acres and 26 cents of Kshetra Linga temple land) is owned by people of Kshetra and the hamlets. Less than 150 acres is owned and cultivated by outsiders. Out of a total area of 4087 acres and 49 cents nearly 514 acres of land is covered by the river, village sites, roads, burial grounds and so forth.

It is clear from Table I that the Lingayat Panchachara constitute the single largest group (38 percent of the total population) in the village. They also own the largest acreage of land i. e. 57.8 per cent of the village land. Only 42.2 per cent of the land is shared by the remaining 62 per cent of the population representing 18 caste groups. Out of the 42.2 per cent as much as 6.7 per cent shown as owned by the Kshatriyas is in fact temple land.

The Kshatriyas as a group barely form 3.3 per cent of the

population and the extent of temple service land held by them is, as already indicated, only 6.7 per cent. The Kshatriyas as Trustees of the temple in addition, exercise control over five hundred acres, as will become clear later.

From the above it can be deduced that there is a close correlation between landholding and power in Kshetra.

The Theme

The Kshatriyas and Lingayat Panchachara are groups contending for power as a result of owning much land. The two are dominant in relation to other caste groups in the village, while between them there is constant struggle to supplant the other. The household and per capita landholding for the Kshatriyas works out at 18 acres 6 cents and 2 acres 58 cents, while for Panchachara Lingayat it is only 10 acres 5 cents and 1 acre 91 cents respectively. This is because the Kshatriya caste is a compact kin-group showing a good deal of cohesion. In contrast, the large number of households among the Lingayat Panchachara acts adversely and there is lack of unity. The Panchachara show individual differences, and do not constitute a kingroup either. These are some of the reasons which explain the success of the Kshatriyas in spite of opposition from the Panchachara Lingayats who made all efforts to dislodge the Kshatriya control over the temple-land and other resources.

As land is limited, and temple land is inalienable but very fertile, more and more people seek for cultivation the land owned and controlled by the Kshatriyas. This in turn helps to keep the Kshatriyas in a dominant position with a good deal of prestige in the village especially in relation to caste groups other than the Panchachara. This, together with some other factors, especially religious susceptibilities of the people have helped the Kshatriyas to hold on to their position in the Panchayat and to a certain extent in the social life of the village. But Veerasaivas as a group are never united. There are divisions and internal dissensions among them which work against the common interest of the group.

It is pertinent to note in this connection that the Brahmins

possess the highest percentage of land per household and individual. This, together with the high ritual status they enjoy, should have also made them a group contending against the Lingayats. This has not happened possibly because there are no opportunities for the Lingayats to meet the Brahmins. The Lingayat-Kshatriya relation is on the other hand closer in so far as the Lingayats are employed in the temple services. The closer the relations the greater are the chance for clashes. In addition, the Lingayats do not accept the ritual superiority of the Brahmins. They have their own priestly caste which makes them a ritually self-contained group challenging the status and claim to superiority of the twice-born castes.

As twice-born castes, Brahmin-Kshatriya relations are closer. The Brahmins render ritual services to the Kshatriyas and are also priests in the Kshetra Linga temple. In all the disputes between Kshatriyas and Lingayats, the Brahmins when unable to support the Kshatriyas openly, have at least been sympathisers of the Kshatriya cause. The Brahmins did not take any interest in the power politics of the village partly because they are a small minority and partly because their interests were never involved as were the Kshatriyas' in connection with the temple. The Brahmins have enough land and have not shown any inclination to acquire more land, but they do not have much land for sale. In contrast the Panchachara Lingayats have long been trying to wrest power from Kshatriyas and particularly to take possession of the temple and its lands, since the ultimate symbol of power in the village is temple itself. This, however, they have failed to achieve so far.

Land Otherwise Available For Cultivation

Most of the land owned by outsiders is cultivated by themselves, since Kshetra revenue village is quite close to their own villages, such as Kolalu and Guruvathi (see the map). However, in some cases the land of the absentee-owners is cultivated locally either on share-cropping or on lease basis. Some 8-10 persons of Kshetra have migrated to nearby villages, to live with their relatives, or in search of a better life. The little land owned by them is available for cultivation locally on the above terms. Some small holders lease their land to cultivators for a net sum

of money or on share-cropping basis, owing to difficulties such as absence of male members in the household.

The total quantity of land available for cultivation is thus limited. Although such arrangements can meet the needs, they fail to satisfy the demands of landowners ambitious to purchase land. Share-cropping and lease cultivation do not satisfy a farmer, because his ultimate desire is to settle down as an independent cultivator. When this desire remains unfulfilled, it naturally influences relationships within and between caste groups. The point I wish to emphasize is how a limited supply of land in Kshetra has tended to increase tension and disputes between the Kshatriyas and the Lingayat Panchachara.

Caste Hierarchy

A brief discussion of the social structure of the village is necessary to show how the Lingayats contend ritually and socially, with the twice-born castes. Table-III shows the approximate hierarchy of caste-groups in Kshetra.

Table III Approximate Hierarchical position of Caste-Groups in Kshetra

A Twice-born	B. Veerasaivas	C. Non-Lingayats	D. Untouchables
1. Brahmin	1. Jangam	5. Kuruba	13. Cheluvadi
2. Kshatriya	2a Lingayat	6. Maratha	14. Kancha-
3. Panchala	Panchachara	7. Sethi	veera
or	b Lingayat	Banajiga	15. Madiga
Viswakarma	Handerahuta	8. Barike	
	c Lingayat	9. Muslim	
	Banajiga	10. Pinjari	
	d Lingayat	11. Talawari	
	Shivasimpiga	12. Agasa	
	e Lingayat	(Washerman)	
	Sadaru		
	3. Lingayat		
	Potter		
	4. Lingayat		
	Barber		

The twice-born castes and the Veerasaivas (as shown above) in Kshetra are equal in relation to one another. The hierarchy at its upper levels thus contains religious and social groups which remain distinct. While the twice-born represent traditional Hinduism, the Veerasaivas constitute a Sectarian group within Hinduism, yet they consider themselves on par with the twice-born.

Historical Background

Veerasaivism as it rose and rapidly spread in Karnataka during the 12th century, owes its success to the teachings of Basava, a rebellious Brahmin social reformer and his followers. Veerasaivism is anti-Brahmanical in so far as it condemned the rituals and rigid caste structure of Brahmanical Hinduism. It aimed to create a casteless society but could not, however, succeed. The rapid growth of Veerasaivism was made possible as converts from other castes were recruited to the new faith. This, however, resulted in proliferation of castes and sub-castes among Veerasaivas. Occupational and customary differences persist, and today, although different sub-castes have started interdining, marriage is still endogamous. The rank ordering among Veerasaivas (as given in Table III) is based on ritual status.

Veerasaivas of Kshetra have seldom acted as a unified body. This may be partly due to historical processes connected with the conversion of people from different castes to the new faith. Fissiparous tendencies continued. Further there is no strong centralized religious authority to whom all Veerasaivas owe allegiance. The degree of freedom and individuality displayed by Lingayat families and individuals cause disunity and disorder among the sub-castes and even within a single sub-caste, such as the Panchachara in Kshetra. These facts are important to the extent that they throw light on political relationships in the village, particularly among the Lingayat sub-castes themselves.

The cleavages between traditional Hinduism and Veerasaivism are expressed overtly. The Lingayats do not accept ritual services or cooked food from twice-born castes. The Jangams; the priestly caste among the Veerasaivas, officiate for the Lingayats

on all ritual occasions. The Lingayats claim ritual equality with the Brahmins. The two castes constitute contending groups in Kshetra. The claims to superiority on the basis of religious differences and ritual status often find expression in an attempt to secure economic, political or other secular advantages. This is how the Kshatriya-Lingayat relationship developed or has at least expressed itself. This antagonism was often couched in religious terms but the real basis was economic and political interest.

The Temple And The Lingayat-Kshatriya Disputes

In order to understand the economic, and political interests and inter-caste relationships in Kshetra, it is useful to keep in mind the Kshatriya ownership and control of the Kshetra Linga Temple and its economic resources. The claims and counter-claims made by the Kshatriyas and Veerasaivas of Kshetra and the surrounding villages to the temple and its resources lead to conflicting versions of the founding of the village and the temple.

However, it is possible to reconstruct the history of Kshetra from the available records. The founding of the village does not coincide with the founding of the temple by the Kshatriyas. The Kshatriyas claim antiquity from the rulers of Vijayanagar and they probably came and settled in Kshetra after the collapse of the Vijayanagar empire in 1565.

A fortress was then built to protect Kshetra. There are records of feudal rulers of the area, who often made donations in cash and kind to the Kshatriyas to run the temple. One such donation consisted of collecting revenue from the four adjoining villages of Ramapura, Malapura, Mallapura and Somalapura to maintain the temple as well as to pay tribute to the feudal lord (the position of these ruined villages is indicated on the map. They are still commemorated by the dilapidated Hanuman temples). It is possible that the inhabitants from these four unprotected small villages moved into Kshetra which afforded protection from external raids. The people who thus moved into Kshetra were Lingayats and paid taxes to the Kshatriyas. The initial mutual dislike between tax-collectors and tax-payers, coupled with

religious cleavages, gradually led to antagonism and tension between them.

Early Attempts of Lingayats Against Kshatriya Superiority

As early as 1885 Lingayats of Kshetra accused the Kshatriyas of misappropriating temple funds, land and jewellery. Later they charged the Kshatriyas as having deceived the Jangams of Shivapur under whom the Kshatriyas initially took to temple service and later threw off the Jangam control and appropriated the Saivite temple and its resources. In a series of court litigations both civil and criminal cases were fought by the Lingayats and the Kshatriyas. A Government decision in favour of the Kshatriyas has consolidated their position. The Kshatriya-Lingayat dispute which started in the late 19th century is, however, still unresolved in spite of the Government decision. The emphasis on religious differences between the orthodox and the Sectarian, includes economic interests of the Lingayats in the temple land and resources. Now it finds expression in attempts to control and dominate village political institutions. Following the introduction of a Village Panchayat Board in 1949, the Lingayats have in vain been striving to capture the Panchayat presidency.

The Kshatriya-owned large Saivite temple with a major emphasis on agricultural rites serves as a local and regional centre. Throughout the year pilgrims visit the temple. During festivals in February, May and December, devotees come from even the neighbouring States of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The voluntary contributions during these festivals amount to nearly ten thousand rupees annually.

The Kshatriyas are recognised hereditary trustees of the temple by the Government. This is an important outcome of the mentioned series of lawsuits. Further the temple possesses 662 acres 26 cents of inam land, which is fertile black cotton soil. This is now controlled by the trustee. The control exercised by the trustee has in recent years further aggravated Lingayat-Kshatriya tensions.

Multi-Caste Temple Servants

At the turn of the 20th century, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Barike Marathas, Cheluvadis and Kanchaveeras were serving on differ-

ent positions in the temple. Many Lingayat families were also engaged in temple services. All the temple servants enjoyed temple land for their services. The Brahmins carried out the daily worship in the temple, the Kshatriyas were 'sword-bearers' to the deity, and the cheluvadis acted as pipers. The Lingayats held many important positions, they white-washed the temple, swept the floors, daily lighted the temple lamps and some still play musical instruments (*tambura*) before the deity.

The temple and its land were recognised by the Government as early as 1861. But in a dispute between the Kshatriyas and Lingayat Banajiga of Guruvathi between 1911-14, local Panchachara Lingayats championed the cause of Lingayats, particularly the rights of temple ownership of the Jangams of Shivapur, a neighbouring village in Dharwar district. Failing to achieve this, the Lingayats attempted and succeeded in getting all the temple land transferred in the name of the deity. This was aimed at harming the Kshatriyas. Around 1928, the Hindu Religious Endowment Board conceded the demands of the Lingayats and cancelled individual service-ownership.

The effects of the prolonged litigations between the Kshatriyas and Lingayats from 1911 to 1932 created further problems. One was a deadlock between the Lingayat temple servants, known as the Panchama Pujaris, and the Kshatriyas. Many Lingayat temple servants among whom the temple land was parcelled out at each partition of the joint family, contended with the Kshatriyas, and refused to do their traditional services in the temple but they continued to enjoy temple land. The Government, however, after recognising the Kshatriya right to the temple and its resources, armed the Kshatriya trustee with the power to dismiss temple servants who had failed to render the traditional services. He also had the power to appoint or reappoint people of his choice. Between 1937-43, the trustee exercised his power to dismiss as many as sixty-four service holders, among whom were forty-eight Panchachara Lingayats.

The dismissed Lingayat temple servants went to court of law against the trustee and the Hindu Religious Endowment Board. They claimed personal ownership of temple property. They

accused the trustee as a fellow-temple-servant and argued that he had no right to dismiss them from service or deprive them from enjoying the temple land. The Bellary district court, however, upheld the action of the trustee. Undaunted, the Lingayats appealed to the Bangalore High Court. The case is still pending before the High Court.

Analysis

Turning our attention for a while from the historical to the empirical situation, we can show how the land serves to aggravate relationships. Foremost among the factors is that temple land cannot be sold or bought. The location of fields and the quality of soil have contributed in no small measure to the mounting of tension. To the East, North and North-East of the village, fields are extremely pebbly. The soil is reddish and infertile. To the South, South-East, West and South-West, black cotton soil predominates, this soil is very fertile. Further in this direction is the Tungabhadra river, a perennial river of South India. The river water can be utilised for irrigation purposes by erecting pumpsets and similar devices. A major portion of the temple land is located in this area (see map). The possibility of its optimum exploitation, and the consequent derivation of maximum profits is thus denied, and the land is inalienable. This certainly disappoints ambitious farmers. For it is not their poverty and lack of resources that prevent them from acquiring land. But land has nevertheless become a scarce commodity in the village and a most fertile tract remains beyond the farmers reach.

The introduction of cash crops, such as cotton and groundnut in the district after the first World War has certainly enhanced the value of land. Many farmers prefer to raise cash crops on their land and buy grain (especially jowar) from the market. The opportunities to raise cash crops and thereby accumulate wealth is limited if not totally denied to some of the rich and ambitious Lingayat farmers. As a result of all these factors, the temple and its land have become the centre of antagonism and tension between the Kshatriyas and Lingayat Panchachara, in particular, and others in general.

In Kshetra a total of 142 households follow agriculture as their main occupation. Ninety-three of these are Lingayat house

TABLE-IV

Details of Landless and Landholding Caste-Groups and Farming-Households in Kshetra

Caste Groups	Extent in acres of Land Owned by Households					Land- less House- holds	Total House- holds	Total farming House- holds
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20 and above			
1. Lingayat Panchachara	25	30	25	8	23	22	133	82
2. Handerahuta	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
3. Sadaru	1	2	1	1	—	3	8	4
4. Banajiga	6	1	3	—	1	5	16	4
5. Sivasimpiga	—	—	—	2	—	2	4	2
6. Lingayat Potter	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
7. Lingayat Barber	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	—
8. Jangam	3	1	—	—	—	2	6	1
9. Brahmin	—	2	—	—	2	—	4	1
10. Kshatriya	2	—	—	—	3	4	9	—
11. Panchala	7	3	—	—	—	4	14	1
12. Kuruba	27	11	15	5	1	8	57	21
13. Maratha	2	3	—	—	—	8	13	2
14. Sethi Banajiga	1	—	1	—	—	1	3	1
15. Barike	4	5	2	—	—	7	19	3
16. Muslim	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	—
17. Pinjari	—	1	2	—	—	1	4	3
18. Talawari	6	1	2	—	—	4	13	6
19. Agasa	3	—	—	—	—	6	9	—
20. Cheluvadi	2	—	—	—	—	2	4	—
21. Kanchaveera	4	2	—	—	—	1	7	2
22. Madiga	16	—	—	—	—	12	28	9
	116	62	41	16	30	98	358	142

holds, out of which 82 belong to the Panchachara sub-caste. Unequal landholding and differential fertility of the soil greatly affect the agricultural economy. It is rather meaningless and serves little purpose to speak in terms of average holdings, either per person or among caste-groups. Although 260 households own land in Kshetra, it is far from being equally distributed or everywhere of the same quality. Some have better and more land than others and this creates economic and political imbalances and affects inter-personal relationships. The table above gives details about the landless and the extent of land held by different caste groups and households in Kshetra.

From Table IV it is clear that out of 133 Panchachara households, as many as one hundred eleven have landholdings varying from one to twenty acres and above. In fact, it is among the Lingayat Panchachara alone that there are 5 to 6 persons holding as much as 50-100 acres of land.

This makes the Panchachara the most effective agricultural group in contrast to all others in the village. Table IV shows the number of agriculturists who are actually engaged in cultivation. As already pointed out, not all who own land have actually taken to cultivation. Thus, the Kshatriyas who own land do not cultivate it. Under such circumstances, the bulk of land is cultivated on a share-cropping or lease basis. Here too, it is the Panchachara who exploit these opportunities to the maximum.

To return to the historical process of Panchachara-Kshatriya disputes in Kshetra, it may be recalled how the Panchama Pujaris refused to do their traditional work in the temple and that 48 of them were dismissed from the temple service by the trustee in the 1930's. After the dismissal of the temple servants, the trustee made the judicious choice of retaining the services of the Brahmin priest, Kuruba, Maratha, Barike, Kanchaveeras and Cheluvadis. He also reappointed four Lingayat Panchachara households in temple service. It becomes clear from the table given below, that though originally only about 8 Panchachara households were in temple service, the land had been subjected to such fragmentation by the time of dismissal that the trustee had to recover land from 48 families. With the exception of

Cheluvadi pipers who are now employed on a monthly salary basis, all temple servants are enjoying the use of temple land in return for their services. Temple land as it was held before the dismissal of temple servants and land as it was redistributed after fresh appointments, appear in the following tables.

Table-V (A) Division of Kshetra Linga Temple Land Among Service-Holders Before Dismissal (Temple Records)

Name of the Office	Caste	Extent Acres Cents
1. Temple Priest	Brahmin	93.53
2. Sword Bearer	Kshatriya	171.91
3. Panchama Pujari (Five priests)	Lingayat Panchachara	169.51
4. Water Supplier	„ „	24.19
5. Cleaner	„ „	28.98
6. Sweeper	„ „	9.54
7. Flower Supplier	Kuruba	9.65
8. Mardi Priest	„	42.35
9. Peon	„	5.89
10. Palanquin Bearer	Barike	33.62
11. Miracle Player	Kanchaveera	17.87
Total		606.04
Total land of Kshetra Linga temple including four minor deities		662.26
Total land held by service-holders		606.04
Balance		56.22

Note : The temple records do not say anything about the balance of land, but according to oral information this land was distributed between the Maratha 'miracle players' and Cheluvadi Pipers.

Table-V (B) Redistribution of Kshetra Linga Temple Land Among Service-Holders (Temple Records)

Name of the office			Caste	Extent Acres Cents	
1.	Temple Priest		Brahmin	25.82	
2.	Sword Bearer		Kshatriya	177.61	
3.	Panchama Pujari		Lingayat Panchachara	28.98	
4.	Flower Supplier		Kuruba	9.65	
5.	Mardi Priest		"	16.53	
6.	Malدار		"	4.89	
7.	Miracle Play		Kanchaveera	17.87	
8.	Minor Temple Priests		Lingayat Panchachara	9.39	
9.	"	"	"	10.19	
10.	"	"	"	9.52	
Total				310.45	

			Rs.	
1.	Pipers (total three)	Cheluvadi	75.00	Monthly
2.	Executive Officer	Weaver (outsider)	91.00	"
3.	Peon	Kuruba	30.00	"
4.	Palanquin Bearer	Lingayat Panchachara	4.00	"
			(outsider)	
			Acres Cents	
Total land of Kshetra Linga Temple including four minor deities			662.26	
Total land held by Service-Holders			310.45	
Balance			351.81	

Note : The Balance of land is leased to tenants once in five years and the cash derived forms an important source of temple funds.

The Role of Land and Inter-Caste Relations

It is clear from the above tables that when the redistribution of land was effected, the extent of land held was considerably reduced in the case of all temple servants except the Kshatriya

trustee. The *remaining* 351 acres and 81 cents of land, the bulk of which was formerly enjoyed by the Lingayat Panchama *Pujaris* is today leased to tenants once every five years and the amount thus realised go to temple funds. During 1956, the temple lands were auctioned and the majority of the bidders, i.e., six out of seven, belonged to the Lingayat Panchachara group. The successful bidders further sublet the land for cultivation.

The Lingayat bidders, however, brought considerable pressure to bear upon cultivators in the Panchayat elections during both 1957 and 1960. They even dispossessed a few of their tenants on the suspicion that these tenants had voted against the Lingayat candidates. This technique, however, did not help the Lingayats very much, because the villagers know that the land belongs to the temple and cannot be owned by the Lingayat bidders. The cultivators who cannot bid for auctioned temple land for financial reasons are only partly obliged to Lingayat bidders. There are other ways open to them to lease the temple land. For instance a few of them can collectively bid or the cultivators can get temple land from the Village Panchayat Board President, a Kshatriya, a successful bidder and a younger brother of the temple trustee. From all this one thing emerges, that the tenants exploit land and make little efforts to replenish soil-fertility by appropriate manuring.

The above possibilities have not been explored and put to use by the people yet, there are signs that they can easily lead to this. This again will serve to increase inter-caste tensions between the Panchachara Lingayats and other cultivators. The Kshatriyas are generally on good terms with the majority of the non-Lingayat and Untouchable castes. These relationships are cemented by a network of ritual and economic ties of temple service. The Kshatriyas are also on excellent terms with other Lingayat sub-castes. During the numerous court litigations neither the Banajigas nor the Sadaru opposed the Kshatriyas. In fact, they never challenged Kshatriya ownership of the temple or their control over temple resources. The Banajigas who own grocery shops, supply grocery on a credit basis and get paid as and when the Kshatriyas have cash.

During the history of Kshatriya-Lingayat relationships in Kshetra, the Panchachara Lingayats have always been the actively opposing group, have challenged the Kshatriya right to the temple and its resources and even contended with them on issues of ritual status. In all this the other Lingayat sub-castes remained silent or ignored the Panchachara and had normal relations with the Kshatriyas. Hence it is apt to say that internal disunity among Lingayat sub-castes, and between house-holds and individuals among the Panchachara themselves, has helped the Kshatriyas positively. This is evident from the fact that Kshatriyas won all the lawsuits, hold temple trusteeship and are regarded by the innumerable pilgrims as ritual superiors of the Lingayats. Since the introduction of a village Panchayat in 1949, a Kshatriya elder has been successfully returned as the President of the Village Panchayat Board in all the four elections.

The salient facts that emerge from the above discussion are :

1. Caste and communal differences revolve around empirical situations. Issues regarding ritual status and religious difference may be more evident, but the real cause is economic and political interests.

2. The Lingayat Panchachara tried to exploit religious and caste difference to dispossess the Kshatriyas over the past 70-80 years but without much success. The centre of tension is temple ownership and temple property, especially Kshatriya control over its land.

3. The inalienable nature of temple land disappoints aspiring Lingayat owners. The opportunity to raise cash crops on the fertile black cotton soil is denied.

4. Many Lingayat farmers who could have vied with one another for owning large tracts of land cannot do so, because there is little land that comes into the market.

5. Ownership of land confers status and prestige. It gives security as against the hazards of business.

6. It is ownership and not mere cultivation of land that matters more. The numerical strength of the Panchachara sub caste as compared to the Kshatriya population has resulted in

greater unity among the latter and divisiveness among the former.

7. The Kshatriyas do not cultivate land although they own it. This fits in with the traditional attributes and values of the twice-born. As cultivators they always depended on farm hands. In contrast the Lingayats own as well as cultivate land. They are in the true sense, 'sons of the soil'. The more land they have, the more they would like to own.

8. Land ownership and an agricultural economy in Kshetra thus regulate inter-caste relationships, in that they have led to increased tension, antagonism and cleavages between the Kshatriyas and Lingayats.

9. Caste consciousness and ambition to dominate the village politically (as they already do economically) are due to the increasing outside contact, especially the emergence of Lingayat political leadership at the State level.

10. The prolonged hostility of the Lingayats has succeeded in curtailing the ritual roles of Kshatriyas in the local temple. Indirectly this has helped the Kshatriyas to strengthen their political position :

(a) By being recognized as legal trustees of the temple.

(b) By having increased contact with officials and politicians. The Kshatriyas always play host to visiting dignitaries.

11. Temple trusteeship and village Panchayat Presidentship are held by Kshatriya brothers. Even though the latter is unconnected with the former, the Panchayat simply cannot annex the temple land.

12. The temple festival is a 'notified' one and it is a major source of revenue to the Panchayat. All the Panchayat savings accrue from the temple. Kshatriya-Lingayat tensions cannot be resolved for the temple land serves to aggravate these tensions.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The preceding pages have in brief brought to light some important aspects of Veerasaivism. A sociological study of Veerasaiva movement, beginning as a Sect which culminated in the formation of castes and sub-castes is interesting in itself. It is not claimed here that the empirical description and analysis of Veerasaiva tenets and practices are exhaustive. Yet in the absence from literature of any material on Veerasaivism, it is a first step in that direction. More details will follow.

Veerasaivism is a localized grouping in that it is concentrated mostly in Mysore State. The Veerasaivas constitute about 20% of the total population of the State. They provide political leadership at the State level. Since the formation of New Mysore State in 1956 on the basis of State's Reorganization Act, the Lingayats who were otherwise scattered in Bombay, Madras Presidencies and former Hyderabad State where they constituted an insignificant percentage upon merger with Mysore State are today the single largest 'dominant' group in the State. The emergence of Lingayats as a "State Power" in recent years and yet their claims for inclusion as a backward community are both strange and contradictory.

The history of Veerasaiva movement make it clear that from the beginning it was opposed to Brahmanical Hinduism. In other words Veerasaivism is described as an anti-Brahmanical movement. The anti-Brahmanical elements as the empirical data reveals is the very foundation of Veerasaivism. The Veerasaivas and Brahmins run parallel and are mutually exclusive groups. They do not accept food from one another and there is no ritual interdependence. As Veerasaivas challenge Brahmanical superiority and claim equality with the latter, it is indeed a contradiction to class themselves as backwards. Democracy has brought on scene many kind of changes. Traditionally incompatible

ideas and facts have been rendered practicable. The highest rank in caste hierarchy is traditionally held by the Brahmins. Veerasaivism claimed equal status but today the political processes of democratization are out to reap the fruits of benefit of backwardness which the Brahmins are denied but the Lingayats have gained.

Again due to historical forces, the rapid growth and spread of Veerasaivism became possible only by converting people from other castes to Veerasaiva faith. The heterogeneous origin of converted groups could not be unified by the Veerasaiva philosophy. In consequence today there are castes and sub-castes among the Lingayats which do not interdine nor intermarry with one another.

Sectarian movements developing by proselytization in India have invariably faced the problems of fission in that, they have invariably added more caste-groups and helped further proliferation. The occupational and customary differences despite professing the same faith help maintain separateness.

Veerasaivism is at variance with Brahmanical Hinduism in a number of ways. Where there are common points the ardent Veerasaivas disclaim any kind of Brahmanical influence. In fact the Myth on Page 7 should make it clear to the reader the claims of antiquity by the Veerasaivas.

All ranks of Veerasaivas are Vegetarians and teetotallers, while at least the Kashmiri, Bengali and Gowda Saraswath Brahmins are not. Priestly profession is a traditional attribute of all Brahmins, while among Veerasaivas, they have a separate priestly caste namely the Jangam. The services of the Brahmin priest and a Jangam are again at variance insofar as the former are over-concerned with ritual purity while the latter assert that they remain ever pure.

The differences between Brahmanical Hinduism and Veerasaivism widen as one analyses the domestic ritualism. The emphasis on maintenance of ritual purity is the core of Brahmanical Hinduism, marginal or non-recognition of ritual pollution at birth, death and other life crises is a marked feature of Veerasaivism. To this extent they are both anti-Brahmanical and anti-Sanskritic. Whatever cohesive role sanskritization has

played in the Indian sub-continent, it cannot be said that the Lingayats are agents of Sanskritization. In domestic rituals, the role of the Jangam is of utmost importance and the Jangam apart from being a Guru surpasses the status of *Lingam*, the symbol of Shiva. He stands on a par with the supreme on some occasions. Only one example suffices to illustrate the point. *Karunaprasada*, which in other words is coconut water poured between the feet of the Jangam, is used to worship the *Ista Linga* (personal *lingam*) before being sipped. Perhaps this constitutes a total departure from traditional Hinduism.

Veerasaivism could be demarcated from traditional Hinduism as much for its liberalism as for rationalism in ways and views of life especially in relation to economic activities. The social and moral codes are not as strictly applied as in Brahmanical castes. These liberal views and practices point to the loose organization that obtains among the Veerasaivas. The caste-groups and within a single sub-caste there is nothing like an organized body wielding authority which can have overriding claims about the behaviour and relationships. Caste Councils which are effective organizations in many other castes are absent among Lingayats. The priestly caste has ritual obligations but no control over the day-to-day events. In the absence of a strong centrally organized religious authority, Lingayats owe allegiance to several heads of mutts who have little in common except the religious tenets but otherwise often encourage their followers to fight for relative status. The sub-castes-Panchachara and Sadaru-constitute competing groups. For these and several other reasons, individual Veerasaiva families and groups have always enjoyed a degree of freedom with little or no fear of censure for social and moral lapses.

With regard to economic views and ways, Veerasaivism gave an impetus for the development of secular outlook. Although not comparable to Weberian analysis of the spirit of Capitalism, yet in the Indian context, the Veerasaiva work-ethic is the most secular of its kind and hence rational. It disapproved of the traditional attributes of 'high' and 'low' occupations. It gave a new philosophy of work by advocating to find one's heaven in

one's work—*Kayakave Kailasa*—and stated that even God should have a vocation. The diverse economic activities and the enterprising nature also marks the Lingayats as a distinct group. This is in contrast to Brahmanical Hinduism which believed in graded occupations, forbade manual work to upper castes, but degraded the lower castes on the basis of traditional occupations.

The preponderance of Veerasaivas in Kshetra in relation to other castes, and ownership of land, and other assets which the community enjoys makes them easily the richest group in the village. The presence of the Kshetra Linga Temple whose ownership and resources are under the control of Kshatriyas, one of the twice-born has thrown cold water on the aspirations of the Lingayats. The inalienable temple lands seal the zeal for acquiring more land by the Lingayat farmers. Very little land comes into the market. Thus economic diversification and advancement as understood by the Lingayats is thwarted by temple lands.

For a long time the Lingayats have disputed Kshatriya right to own the temple. In fact they have their own version of the founding of the temple and fought many civil and criminal cases against the Kshatriyas in courts of law beginning from the late 19th century till now. Yet a favourable court decision has conferred the privileges of trusteeship and control of temple property on the Kshatriyas.

When the Lingayats were fighting the Kshatriyas over the temple ownership, it was their economic interests in temple lands and funds that prompted them. They always advanced religious differences; Sectarian as distinct from Traditional Hinduism and discredited the Kshatriyas from playing any kind of religious roles.

The introduction of the statutory Panchayat and a Kshatriya elder returning as Panchayat President successively for four terms since 1949 has roused further antagonism. The Lingayats are now aware of their caste status at State level, especially since it has emerged as a politically powerful group providing leadership, have turned their attention to capturing political leadership in the village. Here again the temple is a stumbling block to Veerasaiva aspirations. The religious susceptibilities of

people prevent them going against the Kshatriyas. Although the temple is the ultimate symbol of authority in the village, part of the Lingayat failure to succeed politically must be attributed to lack of unity, intra-caste, inter-personal and other fissiparous tendencies among the Lingayats.

Inter-caste relationships especially between the Kshatriyas and Panchachara Lingayats are characterized more by conflict than co-operation, yet neither group has totally boycotted the other. As a minority group the survival of the Kshatriyas is tied with the willingness of the majority group for co-existence. The Kshatriya dependence on villagers is nearly complete and land held by the Kshatriyas is cultivated by the Lingayat tenants.

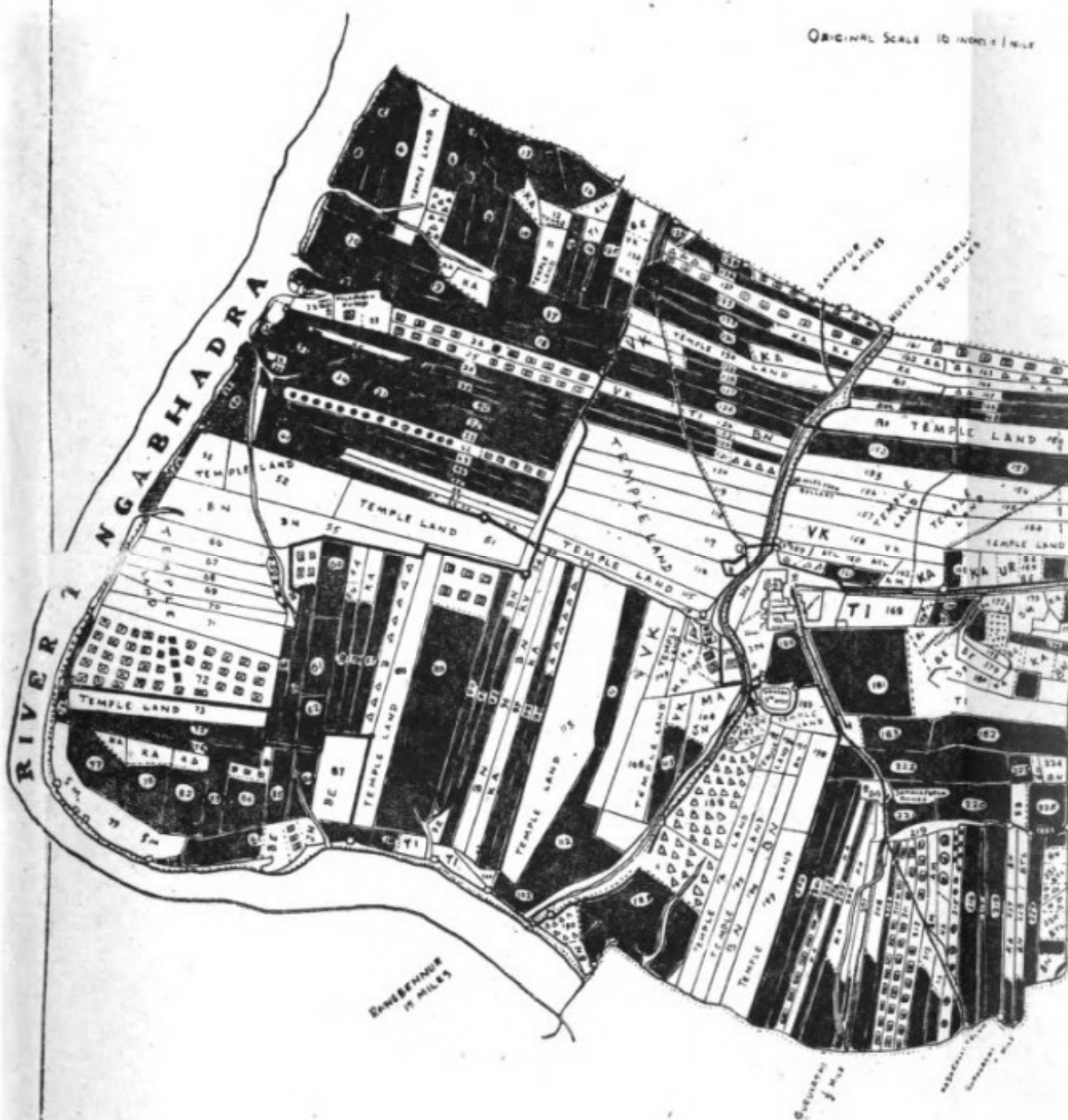
Agricultural economy fasters unity, co-ordination and functional interdependence between different caste-groups. These roles and relationships are based on social inequality. The unequal relationships at the same time are complementary in nature. Even when the village is ridden with tension and conflict, its unity and solidarity have been upheld before others. Absolute co-ordination is an ideal, while community life is always characterized by stressess and strains that often infuse dynamism. Kshetra despite the internal conflict has undergone change, in many respects for the better. The cycle of co-operation and conflict run at an even pace so that the sentiments of village solidarity have prevailed against all internal and external odds.

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67	2	2	enterprsiing	enterprising
67	2	12	klnds	kinds
70	Table II	4	Sivasimpig;a	Sivasimpiga
72	4	4	Severaly	Severely
74	Table IV			
	C. Non-Brahmins		Playing boats,	Plying boats,
76	2	3	articles.	articles,
76	2	8	Casste-Hindu	Caste-Hindu
76	2	9-10	Comblnation	Combination
77	4	3	incharge	in charge
78	3	3	festivitivities.	festivities
80	2	4	Also a good senti- mental	Also a good deal of sentimental
81	1	10	vice-vera	vice-versa
82	Table V	9	Brahmin , , ,	Brahmin....
84	3	11	Althcugh	Although
85	2	4	Table -III.	Table-V.
86	2	16	repententy	repentently
86	3	1	point that	points that
90	4	4	Panchayats	Panchayat
91	3	1	way	ways
103	1	3	geneology	genealogy
105	3	5	acceptidg	accepting
105	5	1	Ligayats	Lingayats
105	5	5	supports	supporters
107	2	6	set up a a candidate	set up a candidate
110	3	6	outstde	outside
111	1	6	thc	the
111	5	7	A cow, as a pair of	A cow, or a pair of
111	Foot note 1		"Caste and the Economic Frontier"	Caste and the Eco- nomic Frontier
112	2	5	secred objects	sacred objects

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